WHY THE PENTAGON DOESN'T TRUST THE CIA Eli J. Lak

THE

NEW REPUBLIC

THE MEDIA'S 9/11 SCHMALTZ
Hanna Rosin

W.G. SEBALD'S TERRIBLE ERROR
Ruth Franklin

BYSTANDERS

THE DEMOCRATIC ABDICATION ON IRAQ

The Editors

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A Journal of Politics and the Arts

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CORRESPONDENCE

O' brother

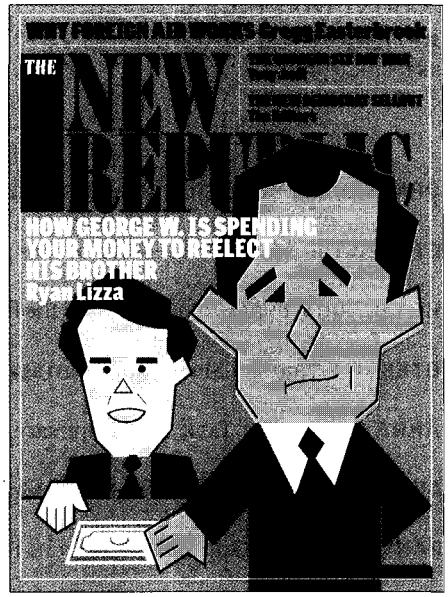
TO THE EDITORS:
Ryan Lizza's July 29 article, "He Ain't Heavy," suggests that the innovative federal-state partnerships we have forged in Florida are suspect because they are politically popular in our state. In fact, good policy makes good politics. We have received federal support for our initiatives because they are good initiatives.

First, many of the federal funding increases Lizza mentioned were allocated by specific formulae, not by the discretion of the White House. In education, for example, Florida's reading grant of $45.6 million was awarded based on the size of our student population, as Congress intended. And while we were indeed one of the first three states to win one of the reading grants, our initial application was rejected and had to be reworked to earn federal approval. Our submission now serves as a guideline for other states; this was hardly a case of a request being rubber-stamped for political reasons.

Second, I think we were particularly successful in drawing down federal dollars after September 11 because our state suffered more than many others due to the collapse in tourism, and because we worked hard on the state level to have the most comprehensive domestic security response in the nation. As for the amount of Small Business Administration loans awarded to Florida businesses, Lizza's own article detailed the reason: We aggressively promoted this program to our people and encouraged them to apply. Other states could have done the same.

Third, I am proud of the success we've had in protecting our shores from oil and gas drilling, but Florida's efforts on this issue started with lobbying the previous administration—though they did not bear much fruit until many months after my brother took office. And our highest-profile environmental partnership with Washington preceded his inauguration: The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan was signed into law by President Bill Clinton and was enacted with bipartisan support.

Fourth, I credit a new paradigm in governing for some of the increased funding you mentioned. Soon after my brother took office, I sent him a letter suggesting that the federal government should see itself as a partner with the states rather than as their master. I argued that for the benefit of our mutual constituents, our focus should be on what we can accomplish together rather than on bureaucratic turf battles. I think the president has embraced this vision not because he is my brother, but because he is a former governor himself. Partnership is a two-way street, and we are committed to being a good partner with Washington no matter who is in the White House.



GOVERNOR JEB BUSH
Tallahassee, Florida

TO THE EDITORS:
Ryan Lizza's story implying that the Department of Energy (DOE) is playing political favorites with respect to a government grant to Florida International University (FIU) for environmental cleanup and research is wrong on so many levels that I don't know where to start. The Clinton administration first approved the grant for research on cleanup in 1995 and provided $26 million in additional funding during its tenure. Even though congressional Democrats in Florida supported that action then as they do now, we can only presume that Clinton made the decision to issue the grant on the merits of the case.

We make funding decisions on these programs based on the merits of the issue and on the potential of important university research to bring added value to the ongoing work by DOE. Lizza is wrong to imply otherwise.

Also, Lizza got it wrong again when he said DOE's Secretary of Energy Advisory Board is "one of those obscure government panels that presidents fill with patronage hires." First of all, you don't get paid to serve on the board. Second, had Lizza bothered to review the board's membership, he would have found that at least half of the appointees were appointed during the Clinton administration, and they continue to serve on the board along with the appointees from the Bush administration.

JOE DAVIS
Deputy Director, Public Affairs
Department of Energy
Washington, D.C.

RYAN LIZZA REPLIES:
Governor Jeb Bush is incorrect when he says "many of the federal funding increases [I] mentioned were allocated by specific formulae." My article dealt with half a dozen different programs where Florida was receiving special attention from Washington. Only one of those programs had funding that was formula-based: the $45.6 million reading grant. But my point about that grant was not that the amount was too high but that the manner in which it was awarded was politicized (for example, two of the authors of Governor Bush's reading proposal were also members of the federal panel that reviewed it). As to the environmental issues, the governor also fails to address my main point: The federal government paid too much money to buy back the oil and gas leases off Florida's coast and in Big Cypress National Preserve. Instead, apropos of nothing, he mentions the Everglades Restoration Plan, an issue never raised in my piece.

As to Joe Davis, who says he doesn't know where to start, here's a suggestion: Start by addressing the actual allegations made in my piece about DOE's generous grants to FIU. First of all, FIU President Modesto Maidique is a Bush appointee to the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board. Members of that board serve for two years, so it isn't surprising that some are Clinton holdovers. I never said that the board was filled *only* with Bush appointees, but it is a fact that Bush has filled this board with political friends, like Republican lobbyist Vin Weber and Teamster President James P. Hoffa. Also, it is irrelevant that money from the program went to Florida under the Clinton administration and that Florida Democrats support these grants (why wouldn't they?). The point is that the grant-making process was manipulated by the Bush administration. A career DOE official says that the suspiciously large percentage of funding—30 percent—going to FIU from this one program is politically motivated. DOE staffers were asked to come up with

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a reason to send an extra $3 million to FIU. In case Davis is unaware, that's not how the federal grant-making process is supposed to work.

Budget punch

TO THE EDITORS:

Jonathan Chait's July 29 column on the state of the federal budget deserves reply for reasons beyond its harsh personal tone ("Private School"). Chait attacks me for saying that the federal government had been underestimating its revenue by as much as $80 billion per year. That was a true statement when I made it on "Nightline" 18 months ago, and it remains true today. A few minor things have changed since then. A weak economy fell into full-blown recession in March; terrorists struck our country in September, and we launched a war against them that continues unabated; and the stock market has dropped sharply, taking a lot of federal revenue with it. Those events caused the large change in our budget posture.

The administration's "wildly optimistic economic projections" of which Chait writes are below the Blue Chip private consensus. I guess they are all dissembling too. And please, no falsehoods about the role of the president's 2001 tax-cut bill. It represents less than 15 cents of each dollar of difference in our 2002 budget outlook; the budget would be over $100 billion into the red if the bill had never passed.

One fundamental point has not changed: Deficits are a danger. They should be attacked by the one tool we have immediately at hand—limiting spending wherever we can while taking every step possible to sustain and extend the economic recovery now underway.

The deficit's reappearance is a product of events, not deception by anyone. Linking it irrationally to corporate scandals amounts to a smear and, worse yet, misleads readers. TNR readers may want log onto *www.omb.gov* to get a fuller story.

MITCHELL E. DANIELS JR.
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, D.C.

JONATHAN CHAIT REPLIES:

Mitch Daniels seems to be hoping that few of those who read his letter will remember my original article. The collapsing long-term surplus has little to do with the recession or September 11—the cost of extra homeland and defense spending and reduced revenue from the recession

continued on page 45

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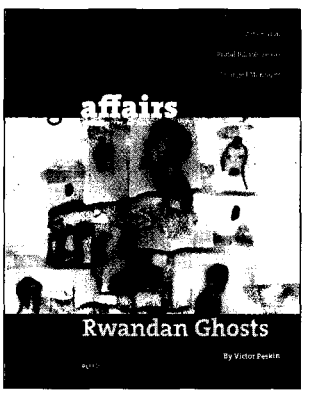

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Ex-Friends

WHEN IRAQ HAWKS hear Iraq doves say the United States needs international support for a war against Saddam Hussein, they get suspicious. And understandably so. Saying the United States shouldn't invade without global support is a convenient way for American politicians to oppose an invasion while fobbing responsibility for that opposition onto non-Americans. It allows the Bush administration's critics to outsource foreign policy judgments they should be making themselves.

But even though Americans should make up their own minds, international opposition to an Iraq war is still a big problem. The problem isn't moral—given the penchant of many of our European allies for cutting lucrative deals with dangerous dictatorships like Iraq and Iran, they don't exactly hold the ethical high ground. And it isn't military either—if the United States has the support of a couple of countries on Iraq's border, it can overthrow Saddam without a single French or German sortie.

Rather, European opposition is a problem financially and politically. It's a financial problem because when it comes to overseas expenditures, the United States (especially with Republicans running the government) is cheap. If Europe doesn't back the war, it won't be obligated to help pay for the post-Saddam peace. And that could leave Iraq's reconstruction (including, perhaps, peacekeeping) almost entirely in the hands of a Bush administration that loathes nation-building and faces a mountain of budgetary red ink. In which case Iraq might never be adequately reconstructed at all.

European opposition also represents a political problem because much of the world—rightly or wrongly—considers the United States a colossus bent on dominating the planet. If war with Iraq is seen as a purely American exercise, it will provoke even greater hostility toward the United States down the road. The Bush administration seems to think multilateralism gives weak European states an influence they don't deserve. But it also eases their resentment of the United States, which makes them less likely to band together to try to cut Washington down to size.

Since returning from his August vacation, President George W. Bush has lobbied numerous foreign leaders, which would seem to suggest an all-out White House effort to convince other governments to back war with Iraq. But in a deeper sense, that effort is an illusion. The Bush administration has actually put remarkably little effort into winning our allies' support for overthrowing Saddam. In fact, it has helped produce much of the international opposition it now seeks to overcome.

It has done so by picking a series of petty fights with America's closest allies that have bred public hostility throughout Europe and have made it politically harder for European leaders to support the United States now that it really counts. The fights started soon after Bush took office: In March 2001 he rejected the Kyoto Protocol, a global-warming pact beloved by Europeans. Relations worsened that summer when the United States opposed a treaty restricting the spread of biological weapons and signaled its intention to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. By August 2001 an *International Herald Tribune* poll found that less than 20 percent of respondents in Britain, Germany, France, and Italy thought Bush took European concerns into account when making U.S. policy. In a quote that now sounds prophetic, Dana Allin, an expert on trans-Atlantic relations at London's International Institute for Strategic Studies, warned, "[I]f a crisis erupts—in the Persian Gulf or Taiwan Strait—where European views and interests are ambiguous ... [Bush's] unpopularity certainly could impair his ability to line up allied support for U.S. action."

Before September 11 the Bush administration could perhaps be forgiven for stiffing America's friends in Europe. After all, in a world where the United States faced no grave threats, and needed no grand coalitions, what was the harm? But astonishingly, the White House has continued playing hardball with European governments even after it knew it might need those governments' backing for a war with Iraq. All this year the Bush administration has waged a remarkably heavy-handed campaign against the International Criminal Court, an institution enthusiastically backed by virtually all of America's European allies. Rather than seeking to modify the court to protect U.S. troops from politically motivated prosecution, the White House has instead tried to bludgeon its allies into signing treaties guaranteeing Americans immunity—threatening to oppose both future peacekeeping missions and the further expansion of NATO if it doesn't get its way.

On trade, the Bush administration has been equally myopic. In March it slapped tariffs on steel imports from Japan, Russia, and a host of European countries, including Britain. The tariffs humiliated Tony Blair, who was mocked at home for having sent troops to fight alongside the United States in Afghanistan and having received nothing in return. In Moscow—which had swallowed hard and allowed U.S. bases in Central Asia—Alexei Arbatov, a key member of the State Duma, spoke of Russians' "deep sense of resentment. They do not believe that for all the strategic and military concessions Russia will get great economic cooperation." The White House followed up its steel decision in May with a farm bill packed with protectionist subsidies and 27 percent duties on Canadian softwood lumber.

The point is not that the Bush administration was wrong, and the Europeans right, on each conflict. Rather, it is that compared with European support on Iraq, each conflict was trivial. The Bush administration prides itself on its ability to set aside distractions that interfere with its post-September 11 mission—which is why it has essentially put American policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on hold until we go after Saddam. But with regard to Europe, the administration has done exactly the opposite—miring itself in one peripheral spat after another. And those spats are coming back to haunt the United States today. Take Germany. All year the Bush administration has been sticking its finger in Berlin's eye over global warming, trade, and the International Criminal Court. The result is that, according to a recent poll by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the German Marshall Fund of the United States, 62 percent of Germans rate American foreign policy as either fair or poor. And that has led German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, facing a tough reelection challenge, to curry public favor by slamming the Bush administration's Iraq policy—which must put a smile on Saddam's face.

In the second presidential debate with Al Gore, Bush said, "It's important to be friends with people when you don't need each other so that when you do there's a strong bond of friendship." A good insight—too bad he's forgotten it when it matters most.

PETER BEINART

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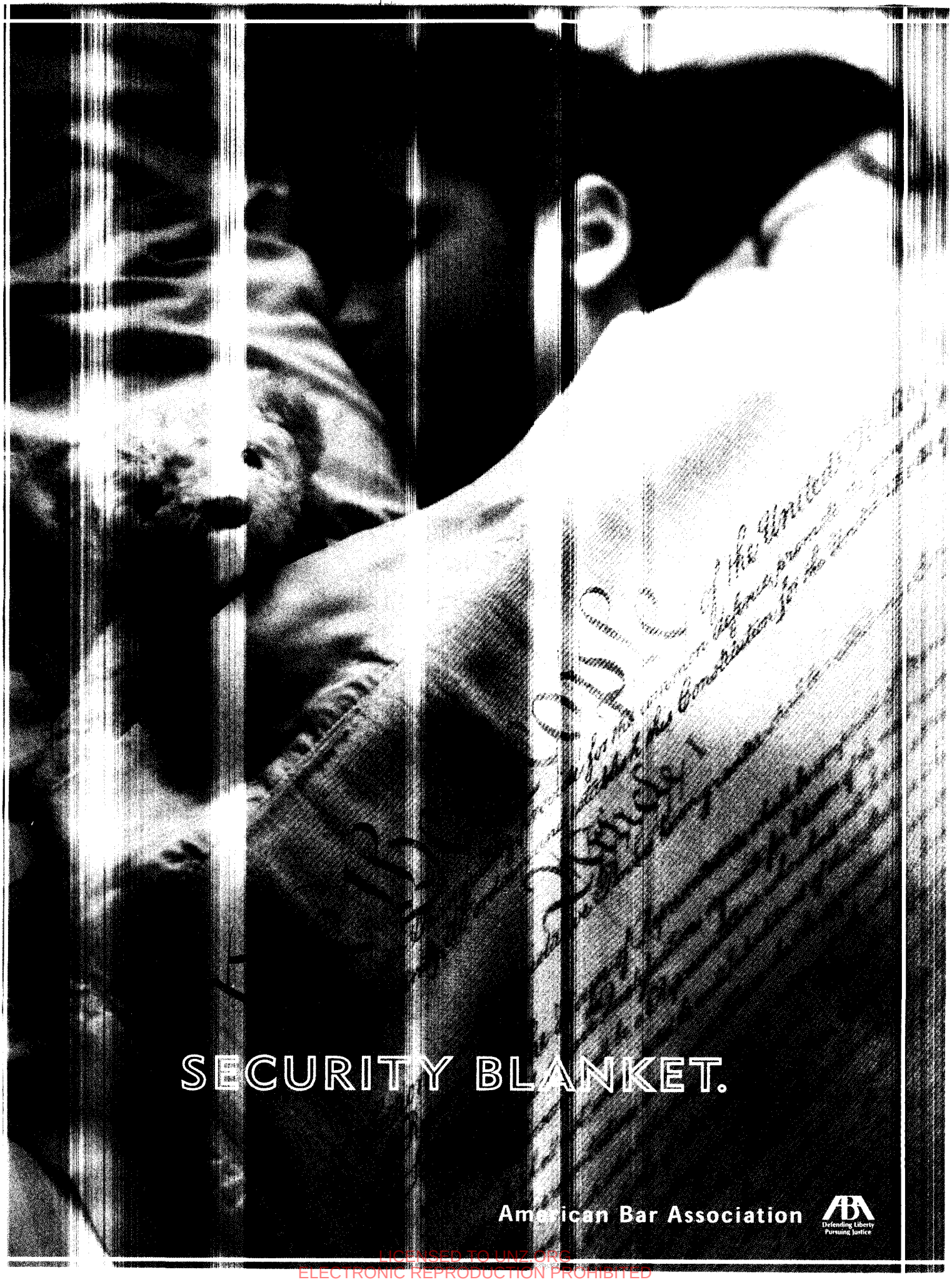

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SEPTEMBER 23, 2002

Bystanders

IT HAS BEEN a long time since this journal felt so despondent about the Democratic Party. The United States is today engaged in perhaps the most important foreign policy debate in a generation. In response to a reverberating catastrophe and a terrifying threat, the administration of George W. Bush has proposed a radical new doctrine to govern America's role in the world, one that commits the United States to war in Iraq and perhaps beyond. Foreign leaders warn that by assuming the right to attack sovereign states on the basis of a potential threat, the Bush administration is rewriting the rules of the international system and lifting a taboo that has kept large chunks of the globe at peace. Retired American diplomats and generals worry that war with Iraq could radicalize much of the Muslim world. The highbrow press increasingly writes and talks of little else. And yet with the possible exception of Joe Lieberman, the leaders of the Democratic Party have nothing serious to say.

Oh, the party's leaders speak: They appear on talk shows; they write op-eds; they convene congressional hearings. But most of what they say is best understood as highly articulate evasiveness. They have devised a series of formulations designed to make the party appear to be offering a clear response to the president's proposed war, when it is actually doing the opposite. In fact, Washington's leading Democrats have neither taken a forthright position on an invasion of Iraq nor seriously answered the Bush administration theory of preemption that justifies it. No one today can honestly say he or she is a Democrat because of what the party believes about the greatest threat facing the United States. The Democrats are a party of bystanders, a party without a position on the issue that matters most.

The Democrats' evasions come in several forms. The first, and most naked, is the contention that the Iraq debate should wait until after the November elections. This is what Senator Ted Kennedy meant when he argued last week that "we can't let it [Iraq] replace the domestic agenda," and it is what Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe meant when he declared hopefully that "people are going to vote on the kitchen-table issues we've talked about for eighteen months." But if the Democrats succeed, if they make this fall's election a referendum on prescription drugs and pension reform, they will have done the voters a disservice. Elections should be about the most urgent issues facing the country; and compared with war with Iraq, the Democrats' litany of poll-tested standbys is frankly trivial.

The Democrats rationalize their efforts to keep Iraq off the campaign trail by insinuating that the Bush administration, by proposing a congressional vote on Iraq before Election Day, is exploiting the war for political gain (see "Hidden Profit" by Michael Crowley, page 18). But in fact, the real cynics are the Democrats, who are trying to conceal their views on the war until after November 5 and, thus, deny their constituents the information they need to cast an intelligent vote. As a matter of democratic process, the party's position is untenable. And it is self-defeating even as a matter of crass political self-interest. Today's polls may show the Democrats with an advantage on the domestic issues the public supposedly cares about most, but ultimately that advantage will not matter if the party is timid and irresponsible on questions of war and peace. Do today's Democrats really need to be reminded of the political history of the last two decades of the cold war?

The second evasion is that Democrats need not take a position on Iraq because President Bush has not yet "made the case" for war. But the case is clear: Saddam Hussein is pursuing nuclear weapons, and the only way to make sure he does not use them against the United States or its allies is to remove him from power. It is true that the Bush administration has not spelled out how close Saddam is to nuclear capability and exactly what weapons of mass destruction he currently possesses. But the case for war does not require that level of certainty. All it requires is confidence that Saddam is aggressively pursuing nuclear capability and that he could achieve it in years rather than decades. Given that, it is precisely the *uncertainty* about when Saddam will get the bomb upon which the pro-war argument relies.

That is why the Democrats' suggestion that they need not take a stand until the Bush administration provides empiri-

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cal evidence misses the point. The empirical evidence is necessarily limited. More importantly, it acquires meaning only in light of a theory about international affairs. The Bush administration's case for war is its theory of preemption. And it is the Democrats who have declined either to embrace that theory or to refute it in the name of containment and deterrence. Prominent Democrats could argue that Saddam has been contained over the last decade and that sanctions and U.N. inspections can contain him in the future. They could insist that if the Soviet Union could be deterred by the threat of mutually assured destruction, so can Iraq. Those are not the views of this magazine, but they would at least be forthright responses to the theory underpinning the Bush administration's prospective war. But the Democrats do not make these arguments, either because they don't know what they think or because they consider it politically wiser not to say. Instead they keep insisting that the Bush administration has not adequately begun the debate over war. But the debate will begin the moment those who disagree with Bush begin it. The obstacle to democratic deliberation is not just the secrecy of the administration but also the silence of the opposition.

The third Democratic evasion is multilateralism, the insistence that the United States should not go to war if the rest of the world says no. But the important question is not whether other countries agree with the United States but whether those countries are right. Gerhard Schroeder opposes war because he does not think September 11 changed the world. He thinks that the old principles of containment and deterrence still work in an age when petty tyrants and fanatical terrorists can obtain weapons of mass destruction. Unlike President Bush, he does not hear a ticking bomb. If Tom Daschle agrees, then he should say so. If he doesn't agree—if the rationale for war is as strong as Bush says it is—then surely that rationale outweighs the costs of going it alone. But instead Democratic leaders are hiding behind the alliance's skirts, using Europe's opposition to avoid explaining how they see this dangerous world. Multilateralism, in the hands of today's Democrats, is not a foreign policy vision; it is an absence of foreign policy vision, an abdication of the party's obligation to think for itself.

WHAT WOULD A Democratic foreign policy vision look like? It would start with the realization that preemption is not alien to the Democrats' best traditions. Consider the party's 2000 platform, which defined a foreign policy doctrine called "forward engagement." "Forward engagement," the document explained, "means addressing problems early in their development before they become crises, addressing them as close to the source of the problem as possible, and having the forces and the resources to deal with these threats as soon after their emergence as possible." When that document was written, its authors in the Gore campaign may have been thinking primarily of civil wars like those in the Balkans. But after September 11 it is clear that the gravest danger the United States must address is weapons of mass destruction in the hands of dictators and terrorists. "Forward engagement" (a version of the old strategic concept of "forward defense") is itself a recognition that containment is no longer enough, that the prerogatives of sovereignty can no longer give countries the right to hatch plans that will eventually spread mass destruction beyond their borders.

Of course, there are other ways to "engage" looming threats apart from military force. Indeed, few threats are best engaged militarily. But for more than ten years now the United States has been pursuing an economic and diplomatic strategy aimed at preventing Saddam from developing biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons that could endanger the world. And for more than ten years—despite sanctions that have ravaged his country—Saddam has developed those weapons anyway. The evidence of the last decade, and of the last several weeks, suggests that Saddam will never allow weapons inspections that impair his obsessive pursuit of nuclear and other dangerous weapons. There may be tactical reasons for raising the weapons-inspections issue again, but they will likely only defer America's hour of reckoning. And as the Democratic platform of forward engagement recognized, postponing such moments too long is the most dangerous course of action of all.

Only once the Democrats accept that under certain conditions preemption—including the preemptive use of military force—is not alien to their traditions can they credibly develop a broader vision for combating the nuclear and terrorist threat. That broader vision would involve an equal commitment to the many nonmilitary ways in which the United States can prevent dangers from becoming catastrophes. It would challenge the Bush administration's strangely passive approach to securing nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union and beyond, and challenge the White House's disastrous opposition to peacekeeping, which has badly undermined efforts to rebuild Afghanistan and to ensure that it never again becomes a haven for terrorists. It would recognize that if the United States demands the right to infringe upon the sovereignty of other countries—by ferreting out their unsafe nuclear materials or uprooting their terrorist cells—in the name of preemption, it cannot obsessively reject even minor infringements upon its own sovereignty, as many Republicans today do. It would understand, in short, what the Democratic Party understood in the early years of the cold war—that the United States needs not only the resolve to meet its enemies on the battlefield but also the generosity and liberal spirit to help keep fragile societies from becoming battlefields. These are the principles for which the Democrats could once again stand, but not if they continue to hedge, dissemble, and evade on Iraq. The party's behavior in this first great debate of a new foreign policy era will have consequences far beyond this midterm election. In the coming weeks the Democrats must decide: Will they be present at the creation once again? ■

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NOTEBOOK

SUDDENLY, TRIANGULATION DOESN'T LOOK SO BAD: When the economy was booming in 1999, George W. Bush decided that what it needed more than anything was a large upper-bracket tax cut. Later, when the economy soured, he repackaged that same policy as a recession-fighter and pushed it through Congress. With the economy still slow last winter, Bush helped pass a "stimulus bill" composed mainly of upper-bracket tax cuts. And just last month Bush, still worried about the economy, floated another anti-recessionary measure consisting of—you guessed it—still more upper-bracket tax cuts. These latest proposals are mostly warmed-over GOP perennials, like allowing people to put more money into 401(k) plans and indexing the capital gains tax for inflation. In the past these ideas have been put forward as a way to induce Americans to spend less and save more. Today, with consumer spending one of the only things propping up the economy, proponents of these cuts don't mention that rationale, instead pitching them as a panacea for the stock market. Whatever. The most interesting thing about Bush's plan is that it hasn't gone anywhere. Columnist Robert Novak—a reliable mouthpiece for supply-siders—complains that Bush can't even get congressional Republicans, including conservative House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas, to agree to his plan, which they fear would add to the budget deficit (it would) and be characterized as a sop to the rich (it is). It's worth remembering for a moment that when Bush ran for president, the media largely portrayed him as a moderate who would restrain the ideological impulses of his party's congressional wing. Instead, the president has once again proven that in his insistence on giving tax breaks to the well-to-do and his lack of concern for fiscal discipline, he is just about the most radical Republican in town.

THEIR MAN IN HARARE: Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe has cracked down on his country's press, harassing and arresting journalists who have dared to expose his thuggish and corrupt land-redistribution policy. But Mugabe wouldn't have to resort to such measures if Zimbabwean journalists were as pliable as *The New York Times*' Rachel L. Swarns. In a September 6 story, under the headline "CRITICIZED BY THE WEST, MUGABE IS A HERO TO MANY," Swarns reported on "the man who has decided to remake the colonial map that left millions of blacks stranded on rocky, arid soil and a tiny white minority in control of half of Zimbabwe's fertile land." Mugabe, Swarns explained, may be reviled by Western leaders like Tony Blair and Colin Powell for his land-redistribution program—under which white-owned farms are being forcibly seized by the Mugabe regime—but he is a hero to some African leaders. The reason? According to Swarns: "The struggle to undo the legacy of colonialism resonates with African leaders, particularly in southern Africa, where whites still control most of the land in Namibia and South Africa." Of course, that struggle also resonates with the Western leaders and human rights groups criticizing Mugabe. Indeed, they object to Mugabe's redistribution program not because they believe Zimbabwe does not need land reform, but because Mugabe has been handing the seized farms to his rich political cronies and family members *not* the country's poor, landless blacks—which may explain why Mugabe is anything but a hero to his own brutalized, starving people. Still, Swarns lets Mugabe have the last word about such criticisms: "He says white farmers have built a powerful propaganda machine that has misled the Western world about his government," she wrote. Actually, the propaganda machine misleading the Western world is our paper of record.

FIRST, THEY CAME FOR THE TAX DODGERS...: "Now, forgive me, but that is right out of Nazi Germany."—Republican Senator Phil Gramm, on a measure that would impose a onetime capital gains tax on wealthy Americans who renounced their citizenship in order to avoid paying taxes, September 5

RIGHT OF WAY: In the effort to keep terrorists from entering our country—people who, like Mohammed Atta and his companions, come to the United States with the intention to kill Americans—there is at least one principle on which, presumably, we can all agree: There is no absolute right, either moral or legal, for citizens of foreign nations to be admitted to the United States. According to an article in *The New York Times*, however, the Justice Department has established new procedures (fingerprinting, photographing, and reporting requirements) that will apply to "anyone arriving with a student, business or tourist visa who is believed to fit the criteria of a potential terrorist ... [or] who are considered security risks by the State Department or by the Immigration and Naturalization Service officers, based on intelligence reports of terrorist strategy and behavior." Now certainly if these criteria are defined broadly enough—say, all single men in a certain age range from selected countries—the Justice Department's decision to admit such people but observe them carefully might be sensible, or even overly intrusive. But why, for heaven's sake, would anyone who is in any meaningful sense "believed to fit the criteria of a potential terrorist" or considered a security risk by government officials be admitted to the United States at all? Refusing entry to such individuals violates the constitutional liberties of no one, since the guarantees of the Bill of Rights do not apply to foreigners abroad. It would be a small, and prudent, price to pay for security.

IDIOCY WATCH, CONT'D: "Let's suppose 10 people are killed by a small bomb on a street corner in some city in America. The first thing to understand is that there are 280 [million] Americans. So there's one chance in 28 [million] you're going to be one of those people. By such heartless means of calculation, the 3,000 deaths in the twin towers came approximately to one mortality for every 90,000

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Americans. Your chances of dying if you drive a car are 1 in 7,000 each year. We seem perfectly willing to put up with automobile statistics. . . . There is a tolerable level to terror. Let's relieve ourselves of the idea that we have to remove all terror."—Norman Mailer, interviewed in *The Sunday Times Magazine* (London), September 8

WE BLAMED THE JAPANESE FOR PEARL HARBOR, TOO: Despite reams of conclusive evidence—including statements from Osama bin Laden himself—Reuters still refuses to state as fact that Al Qaeda was behind the September 11 attacks. As the news agency reported in a story this week, "The United States has blamed al Qaeda for the Sept. 11 attacks that killed about 3,000 people." Now why would the United States do a thing like that?

TIMES V. TIMES: "After months of frustration, American commanders appear to have concluded that Osama bin Laden is probably still alive and moving between mountain hideouts somewhere on a 250-mile stretch of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan."—*The New York Times*, August 28, front page

"Some senior officers in the Joint Special Operations Command have concluded that Mr. bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, was probably killed in the American bombing raid at Tora Bora last December, officials said."—*The New York Times*, September 3, front page

NAGOURNEY V. NAGOURNEY: "DOMESTIC CONCERNS TAKE CENTER STAGE IN CONGRESS RACES"—headline of article by *New York Times* reporter Adam Nagourney, September 1

"WITH FOCUS SHIFTING TO IRAQ, DOMESTIC ISSUES FADE"—headline of article by Nagourney, September 5

HOME NEWS: Astute readers of this magazine will notice that this issue contains a new Notebook feature, "Inside the Box," by Bruce Reed. Astute observers of Washington politics will notice that the author, in addition to his comic talents, has some experience in national affairs, having served as Bill Clinton's chief domestic policy adviser and, since 2001, as president of the Democratic Leadership Council. We welcome him to our pages.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: In the September 2 issue, we erroneously defined the acronym ISP as "independent service provider " ("Cable Access," by John B. Judis). It stands for "Internet service provider." We regret the error. ■

INSIDE THE BOX | Bruce Reed

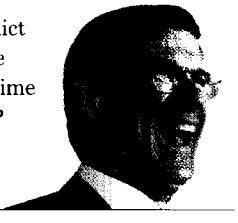
SEPTEMBER SURPRISE
Republicans hope forcing congressional debate on Iraq will prevent regime change in Washington. U.S. gives Saddam toughest ultimatum yet: Disarm, or this time we'll make you watch a month of C-SPAN.

FAMILY FEUD
Cheney and Powell warm up for Baghdad by going to war with one another. 43 to 41: Look Dad—no allies!

FALL LINEUP
Rob Lowe walks when "The West Wing" won't double salary. $150k an episode would have made him first White House staffer in modern era who could afford to pay his lawyers.

COLOR OF MONEY
Bush raises record $100 million, holds White House sleepovers for $100k donors. Just our luck—the one Clinton idea Bush agrees with.

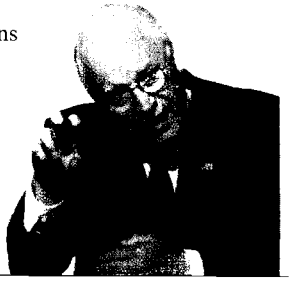
SIMPLE SIMON
After $78 million fraud verdict and Simon campaign's triple back flip on gay rights, longtime Reagan aide calls Calif. GOP nominee "too dumb to win." Schwarzenegger in 2006!



BUSH MARKET
Stocks down $5 trillion and counting. On the bright side, Republicans finally doing something to close the gap between rich and poor.

WE REPORT, YOU REDIAL
"American Idol" contest draws 100+ million votes, same as Gore and Bush combined. Fox wouldn't have rushed to call 2000 election for Bush if they'd known democracy could do so much for ratings.

WHITE COLLARS
Enron exec's plea means more to follow. Cheney starts a trend: Soon lots of former CEOs will be headed to undisclosed secure locations.



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Too many words about 9/11.

All Talk

By Hanna Rosin

In the days leading up to this September 11, CNN's commemorative tribute "America Remembers" occasionally cut to footage of a reporter on that day last year, blank faced, hair covered in soot. The reporter would force out the plain facts, insofar as they were known—"We hear another plane has crashed"—then fall silent, forgetting the usual first-name banter with the anchors. Sometimes the stunned reporter even got the day wrong—"Here, this Wednesday morning . . . ." But most of the time "America Remembers" simply showed CNN's reporters, polished and composed, reminiscing in the studio about their experiences that day. "It was a regular, schmegular day," said one, "my pager just went off." "I was eating roasted nuts," offered another. Then came the "terrible, terrible tragedy" or the "very emotional day"—clichés that on the day itself felt like the products of minds shocked out of artifice but which now just thud like the false solemnity of politicians.

One year later, September 11 has been ribboned into "September 11" or "9/11"—"The Day America Will Never Forget" or the "The Day America Changed" or "The Day A Nation Changed," depending on which station you watch. The aim of these retrospectives is ostensibly the same as the aim of a grieving widow: to weave some comforting narrative out of the chaos. The difference is, the widow's tidy story has desperation just below the surface and usually falls apart in that big empty bed. But Connie Chung's and Diane Sawyer's renditions always end in a heartwarming wrap. These human-interest tableaux borrow the narrative arc of VH1's "Behind the Music." Like Stevie Nicks or Cher, the stories of September 11 in broadcast and print move from success to disaster and back up to triumph again. *People* magazine offers "Stories of Hope": "Love Among the Ruins," about a fireman and a masseuse, both broken, who met at ground zero and married at a nearby memorial; "A Legacy of Love," about a gay man's reunion with his dead partner's mother; "Stronger By the Day," about empowered widows who vow that this tragedy did not happen "in vain." You could read the whole issue without understanding how unbelievably grim that day was, much less that we live in Code Orange days and are contemplating war with Iraq.

Nor is it just the tabloids and their ilk. "To mark the first anniversary of that awful day, we've looked for hope amid the horror," reads the introduction to *Newsweek*'s commemorative issue. "Let's not forget how blessed we still are." The collective message is the same as that of the Boston priest who decided to shelve his relics from ground zero on the anniversary "because we need to move on." It is commemoration as closure, as a way to forget. There's the parade of heroes: firefighters sitting on the truck, leaning against the truck, framed in the blinding sun or at dusk. And not only firefighters: "In fact you are the real heroes," Paula Zahn told one of the cameramen who shot ground zero for days on end. She then added that his daughter, too, is a hero, because she managed to survive her daddy's coming home late every night.

Then, of course, there are the children. In "63 Reasons to Hope," Diane Sawyer gathered 63 children born to women whose husbands died in the attacks. As they cooed and slept, she smiled warmly. "This is an uplifting type of edge," explained producer Jessica Velmans. "You can't be sad when you look at a gurgling, smiling baby."

One would hope that collections of news photos shot at that time would stand as the purest memorial of the attacks; but even those have been tarnished by the Happy Anniversary packaging. *Life* magazine's collection of haunting photos has been turned into an heirloom edition—"accented with pure 22 kt gold and crafted to last for generations"—complete with its own satin-ribbon page marker. September 11 as coffee-table book, a display piece to help you "share" such moments again and again "with your children and grandchildren."

The worst hopeful stories are the ones ostensibly about "chance"—the missed bus or sick kid or lost key that kept one person from dying—that quietly convey the opposite conviction, that God or some guiding force had a hand in all this. Michael Lomonaco, head chef at Windows on the World, went to get his eyeglasses fixed that morning, and so he was on the shopping concourse in the basement instead of on the 106th floor when the planes hit the north tower. "Why did you decide at that critical moment that you were going to try and get your eyeglasses fixed?" Chung asked him, eyebrows raised. "Why do you think you were saved?" The implication is that Lomonaco, and others like him, were somehow protected, chosen—a repulsive idea when one considers what it says about the thousands who died. Chung doesn't consider the simplest explanation: Being the boss that day, Lomonaco had the privilege of arriving at work half an hour late.

The September 11 stories take their cue from pop religion, the God of the best-seller list who is always there with an aloe-coated tissue. When cult-watcher types complain about religious groups exploiting September 11, they usually mean someone like Robert Tilton, the televangelist who published a book with a cover photo of the burning towers titled, *Fear No Evil: What You Need to Know and Do During these Turbulent Times of Fear and Terror*. But at least Tilton uses the words "fear," "terror," and "evil." The rest of the gurus just hug them away. Take, for example, Father Thomas Keating, the Trappist monk and expert on meditation, who in his new book explains why watching people jump from the towers "opens up the possibility of a universal experience of the redemptive force of love and transformation."

This thirst for a happy ending, a valuable lesson, a useful moral, only makes the rare, serious efforts unveiled this week stand out all the more. In PBS's "Frontline" documentary "Faith and Doubt at Ground Zero," written and produced by Helen Whitney, a woman named Marian Fontana grieves, "I couldn't believe that this God that I'd talked to in my own way

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Teacher Union Power Is Awesomely Arrogant

Paul E. Peterson is director of the Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University; senior fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education.

In New York City, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) is fighting efforts to restore order to schools. The school board wants teachers to supervise hallways, lunchrooms, and playgrounds because costly but ineffectual "paraprofessionals" don't command respect. But union leaders refuse to cooperate, even though their members work less than four hours a day.

In California, the National Education Association (NEA) is demanding control of school curricula. In Massachusetts, the NEA has fought teacher competency tests clear to the state supreme court. Elsewhere, the AFT and NEA are preventing the formation of union-free charter schools.

As private sector unionism has waned, the NEA and AFT have become the most powerful labor combination in America. They contribute millions to Democratic and Republican candidates for office. Teachers also constitute as many as a quarter of the delegates to the national Democratic conventions. In school board and school bond elections, teachers outvote citizens by large margins. In a bond referendum in Huntington Beach, California, 93 percent of the teachers voted, according to a Stanford study, though overall turnout was 19 percent; in nearby Santa Ana, 88 percent of the teachers voted, as compared to 23 percent of all registrants.

Yet for all this political influence, unions do not protect the earnings of the many good, hardworking teachers. In 1940, female teachers made better than 60 percent of that earned by average college-educated women; by 1990, they were earning 40 percent. Among males, salaries slipped from 52 to 33 percent of the college-educated average.

As pay has fallen, so has teacher quality. According to the Department of Labor, 50 percent of women entering teaching in the 1970s received high scores on an educational achievement test. Twenty years later, high-scoring female teachers constituted 10 percent of the total. For male teachers, the drop in high scorers was from 20 to 10 percent.

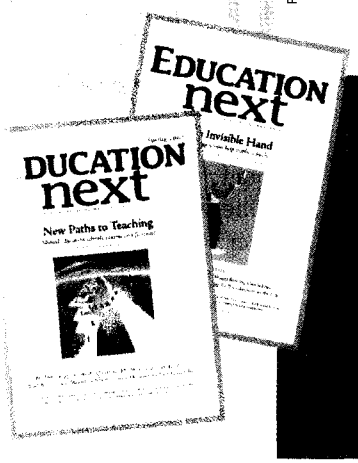
So what's gone wrong? Powerful unions should be fighting for wages that attract the best and the brightest. Part of the problem is insistence on uniform pay, whereby leaders resist attempts to reward teachers of special merit or pay more for those who have skills that are in short supply. More money is given only to those teachers with years of experience or added credentials. Because teacher effectiveness generally declines after five years, and teacher credentials have been proven meaningless, a disconnect exists between service rendered and compensation received. Thus, it makes little sense to pay employees more.

School boards and unions also take the line of least resistance by handing out more rights and less work rather than increasing teachers pay. Indeed, it was to keep wage demands down that the New York school board agreed to give hallway supervision to the paraprofessionals.

Moreover, ineffectual teachers make for loyal union members. And when ineffective teachers abound, more are needed: the ratio of pupils to teachers nationwide plunged from twenty-two to seventeen between 1970 and 1995. More teachers, more dues, more campaign contributions, more power, more rights—lower performance. No wonder lawmakers are beginning to talk accountability.

— *Paul E. Peterson*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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for thirty-five years turned this loving man into bones. And now I can't bring myself to speak to Him anymore." None of the imams or rabbis or priests or widows interviewed goes so far as to deny the existence of God or even to say anything terribly original about the question. But at least they are in the realm of the sacred, with silent, eerie footage to match. Then there is HBO's "In Memoriam: New York City, 9/11/01"—a diary of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's day and a near-perfect record of what took place, the shock and the frenzy.

There are of course reported narratives that help us make sense of September 11, but they are not comforting. These are the re-creations based on new information running in various newspapers this week or in the book *Out of the Blue* by *The New York Times'* Richard Bernstein. They tell the story of Mohammed Atta's transformation from awkward son to steely radical and the rise of the extremist mosques that supported him and the intelligence community that failed to pick up on all of this. The stories, woven together, create a sense of momentum, of near inevitability. They leave you more terrified than hopeful: Are we in a war or not? Are we safe here or not?

Of all the faces of September 11, perhaps the most memorable is that of Stacey Staub, profiled in *U.S. News & World Report*. Staub has never managed the winning, wholesome smile of a Lisa Beamer. The 31-year-old lost her husband eleven days before giving birth to their first child, Juliette. Staub showed up at a bereavement group looking like a heroin addict, skeletal and drawn. And while the group's leader said the therapy has "softened the edges of grief," those edges are still sharp. A year later Staub still sounds like a stranger to closure: "I'd live in a shack with no plumbing and no TV and no cell phones just to have him back," she told *U.S. News & World Report*, before explaining how she grimly teaches her little girl to say "Dada" over and over while pointing to an image of her father on the TV screen. ■

Gay marriages don't change the Gray Lady.

Society Page

By LAUREN SANDLER

IF YOU REGULARLY scan the M.B.A.-cum-M.R.S. highlights of *The New York Times'* Sunday Styles, you probably saw the following recent nuptial: Goldstein (summa cum laude Brandeis, Harvard master's, Columbia master's and law degree, and founder of a Manhattan public affairs consulting firm) gets hitched to Gross (cum laude Yale, Yale B-school, Fulbright scholar, and a vice president of GE Capital). The buttoned-down couple met in Washington when Goldstein answered an ad Gross placed in the *Washington City Paper*: "Nice Jewish boy, 5 feet 8 inches, 22, funny, well-read, dilettantish, self-deprecating, Ivy League, the kind of boy Mom fantasized about." Sunrise, sunset. A perfect *Times* match.

What might have caught you by surprise was the accompanying photograph: Gross and Goldstein are both men. The announcement of Daniel and Steven's union (or as they refer to it in their listing, the "ceremony" to "affirm their partnership") last week represents the integration of same-sex couples into the section. It also marks the renaming of the "Weddings" pages as the (inclusive and legally correct) "Weddings/Celebrations" pages. A long overdue victory, sure. But a revolutionary one? Hardly. Daniel Gross and Steven Goldstein have far more in common with their co-listees than with most of the world: They're full-fledged members of the same elite that has always peopled the *Times'* weddings listings. Sexuality isn't the key here. It's class. Which is why, orientation aside, the Gross-Goldstein partnership reads like old news.

To be listed in what some readers snidely call the "Mergers and Acquisitions" pages, a couple needs to pass through a screening process that functions as a class sieve. A written application requires the following information about the couple: "addresses, schooling, and occupations. Also any noteworthy awards that the couple may have received, as well as charitable activities and/or special achievements. . . . We also require information on the residences and occupations of the couple's parents." According to Dalton Conley, a New York University sociologist, the application nearly mirrors a three-pronged test that academics use to determine class: education (not just how much you've had but where you got it), occupation, and income. Since it's socially incorrect to list income, Conley explains, it can be neatly substituted with wealth. This, he explains, is measured by the inclusion of "charitable activities" in the *Times'* required fields. "Charitable activity is just . . . a polite way of seeing if you have enough accumulated assets, to see if you can give them away," he says. "It's not like they're asking if you do community service." And to Conley, the inclusion of information about the couple's parents' class is the icing on the cake. "We [sociologists] think of class as an intergenerational thing," he says.

Every week the *Times'* weddings announcements follow these criteria to the exclusion of the poor and the working class. Let's take a sampling of the past two issues, September 1 and September 8, in which 130 people (65 couples) were listed in the *Times'* Weddings/Celebrations pages. Of those, very nearly all have high-status jobs—law-firm associate, investment banker, neurologist, White House staff member—but not even one working-class occupation is represented. Indeed, over the past *year* you'll find only four listings for "administrative assistant": One works at a law firm and married an investment banker; one plays the French horn and holds a degree from the Royal Academy of Music; one is the daughter of the assistant head of medicine at a New York hospital; and one wed a *Times* employee. You

LAUREN SANDLER, who lives in New York City, writes about media and culture.

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have to go back to May 1994 to find anyone who lists himself as attending a vocational school; and in that case the lucky groom became an engineer at Caltech and married a geophysicist (Columbia Ph.D.). Gross and Goldstein don't challenge these criteria one bit.

What's the answer to this outdated society game? Timothy Noah argued in *Slate.com* a few weeks ago that the *Times* should deal with its "anachronistic" class exclusion by "Abolish[ing] the *New York Times* Wedding Pages." Noah, who admits to pulling strings to have his own wedding featured, writes, "[S]ince the *Times* can't accommodate everybody, the practical way to implement the latter policy is not to accommodate anybody, unless they're so famous that their doings really and truly command the attention of *Times* readers." But Noah's logic is wrong: No publication is ever comprehensive. Nor should it be. It's the job of editors and reporters to find good stories. Just as *Times* staffers hunt for interesting features across classes in the far more representative City section, they should be sniffing out great narratives, world-shrinking coincidences, tales of struggle and heartbreak and reconciliation, and epiphanies of connection and romance for Styles. Like everywhere else in the paper, the emphasis should be on story, not Society, as the desk that crunches the weddings blurbs is named.

That desk understood the need for story when they instigated the Vows column a decade ago. The column—a reported story about a single, remarkable wedding—is one of the most coveted spots in the paper. It began as an attempt to ad some class diversity to the pages. "They wanted to throw a curveball into the wedding pages, so they hired me, Miss Nobody who knew nothing about society," recalls Lois Smith Brady, a reporter who lived in a studio apartment and worked at a now-defunct alternative publication called *Seven Days*, where the "Manhattan Register" wedding listings poked fun at the *Times*' society pages. The first Vows column she wrote was about a Puerto Rican couple who held their reception in a Queens nightclub. "People for years hated [the column]. I would call anybody who was faintly society and they wouldn't go near it."

Vows could have been a worthy model for the *Times* wedding listings to follow. Instead, the weddings desk has reeled in Vows, making it nearly as classist as the rest of the page. David Brooks, who wrote about the wedding listings in his book *Bobos in Paradise*, says that's how it should be. "Societies always have inequality and some elite set, and if the paper of record can't define it, who can?" People wouldn't read listings that were integrated by class, he predicts, and they would certainly stop talking about them. "Listen, *The Washington Post* has a weddings page that is representative of the whole community. I've never heard anyone mention any of it, because it's not remarkable." But that's not how it has to be. *Romeo and Juliet* hardly lost its narrative punch when it was remade in the barrio as *West Side Story*. Love stories told as swooning uplift or vicious gossip are good if they're good stories and are worthless to anyone but the wedding party if they're not. You shouldn't have to be born lucky to be fit to print. ■

São Paulo Dispatch

Radical Solution

By Franklin Foer

The Brazilian electorate has rebuffed Luís Inácio "Lula" da Silva three times over the last 13 years. The last time, in 1998, the presidential candidate of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (P.T., The Workers' Party) lost by 22 percent. But this year may finally be his moment. Thanks to the country's volatile political culture, the two previous front-runners are tied for second: Ciro Gomes, a former governor of the Northeastern state of Ceará, fell from favor at the end of August after former Health Minister José Serra spent a week airing raw footage of Gomes's gruff style (in one spot Gomes responds to a radio caller's question by grunting, "I will not answer the question of a silly man"); and Serra, a bug-eyed caricature of a soporific technocrat, has failed to generate any deep affection. So Lula, widely seen as the most radical candidate, is sitting atop a 20-point lead as he heads into the first round of voting on October 6. (If no candidate clears 50 percent, the top two advance to a second round on October 27.)

This fact has Wall Street freaked. Ever since last spring, when the first polls showed Lula with the lead, credit agencies and New York investment banks have issued dire warnings and downgraded Brazil's ratings, causing Brazil's currency to plummet and helping to precipitate August's International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout. According to J.P. Morgan's Emerging Markets Bond Index, only Argentina and Nigeria are now riskier than Brazil. In an interview with the daily *Folha de São Paulo*, George Soros warned ominously, "Brazil is condemned to choose Serra as president or else be submerged in chaos."

The markets have cause for displeasure: None of Brazil's three candidates are fervent devotees of the Washington Consensus. But their fears of Lula are out of date. The IMF bailout conditions $24 billion worth of loans on budget surpluses, severely limiting any future president's inclination toward reckless spending. What's more, Lula isn't significantly more protectionist or anti-globalization than his competitors. In fact, unlike Gomes and Serra, who are scrambling to move beyond their center-right bases by pandering to working-class resentments, Lula is moving to the *center* in a bid to win over skeptical middle-class voters. Ironically, the onetime radical may be the best hope for neoliberalism in Brazil.

No Latin American government has more closely followed IMF policies—privatization, fiscal austerity, currency stability—than has the administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso ("FHC," as he's popularly known), now coming toward its term-limited close. So it's not surprising that investors like Soros would pull for Cardoso's handpicked candidate, Serra. On paper at least, Serra is a Cardoso clone. After opposing

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the rise of Brazil's military dictatorship in the mid-'60s, both men spent academic careers in exile, Cardoso as a sociologist, Serra as an economist. Both helped develop the doctrine of "developmentalism"—highly statist, highly protectionist economic nationalism—adding their own Marxian overtones to the theory. Together in the 1970s, upon their return to Brazil, they created a new, European-inspired center-left opposition to promote their developmentalist agenda.

When the men came to power in 1994, however, their ideological paths diverged. In office, Cardoso and his finance minister, Pedro Malan, ditched developmentalism, becoming practitioners of third-way, DLC-style, market-friendly liberalism; Serra remained as loyal as ever to the old cause. He became the in-house critic of Malan's IMF-centric policy, pushing for more government intervention in the economy. During a stint as minister of planning in the mid-'90s, Serra argued that the government should use import controls to close Brazil's trade deficit. He publicly called the government a "sucker" for entering into agreements with the IMF that set rules on borrowing by state-owned enterprises. And his colleagues in the Malan faction accused him of sabotaging privatizations. After becoming health minister in 1998, Serra cemented his reputation as the administration's populist, railing against foreign pharmaceutical manufacturers. When the Swiss drug company Roche, for example, offered a deep discount on an AIDS drug, Serra peremptorily rejected it. Instead, he threatened to revoke Roche's patent. "Brazil is not a nation of suckers no matter what the drug companies think," he exclaimed last year. On the campaign trail he has blared his economic nationalism even more loudly, touting the wisdom of import substitution. And like Al Gore, to whom he's often compared, he has done little to defend the economic policies of his government, even explicitly criticizing its privatizations. "There's no question," says Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies' Brazil expert Riordan Roett, "Serra will be tougher on free trade, globalization, and multinationals. He'll be more interventionist. He's not Cardoso."

GOMES, WHOSE LEAD Serra recently erased with a barrage of attack ads, would be even worse for the markets. While Serra represents the São Paulo industrialists who want protection from international competition, Gomes represents another traditional power base, the oligarchical families of the less industrialized, more traditional Northeast. They have an even more regressive goal: to distribute the political booty that will ensure the continuity of their dynasties. Gomes descends from a dynasty himself: His family has held political office in Ceará since the nineteenth century. Even though families like these—the Sarneys, Magalhães, Collors—cast their lot with the Cardoso coalition in 1994, they resented being ruled by arrogant academics like Cardoso and Serra, who spoke of "modernizing" the political system in which they had flourished for so long. After eight years on the backbenches, the oligarchs want to regain control of the pipelines of patronage and spending that were largely closed in the Cardoso era. The oligarchs, says political scientist Amaury de Souza of the Instituto de Estudos Econômicos, Sociais e Políticos de São Paulo, "see this [election] as a reincarnation of an old rivalry against the rule of Avenida Paulista, the Brazilian Wall Street, and the University of São Paulo," where Cardoso was a professor.

The oligarchs practice a classical strain of populism, railing against the media elites who torment them with charges of "corruption" and against the political power of São Paulo. Gomes also indulges in anti-globalization fire-breathing. "I don't want to be a Brazilian president housebroken by the market," he proclaimed at a forum last month. Earlier this summer he told a group of São Paulo business leaders that he would sooner "cut off my hand" than accede to the demands of foreign banks.

And Gomes might not only turn Brazil away from neoliberal economics; he could weaken its democracy as well. In 1995 he recruited a mentor from Harvard, the legal philosopher Roberto Mangabeira Unger. A godfather of the neo-Marxian school of Critical Legal Studies, Unger promotes something called "democratic experimentalism." His doctrine, Unger claims, would reorganize government to free "individuals from the hold of entrenched social roles, divisions, and hierarchies." The details of his plans, however, aren't likely to do any of this. Frustrated with "politics-slowing" impasses between the president and congress, Unger proposes two solutions in his 1998 book, *Democracy Realized*, that have found their way into Gomes's platform. The first is that the president should have the constitutional right to call for a plebiscite whenever the congress doesn't agree to adopt his programs. And if they reach an impasse, he wants congress and the president to have the right to demand new elections. In other words, Unger and Gomes would give the president new powers to aggressively confront congress. It's the stuff of strongmen—a role for which Gomes seems well-suited, given his blunt, imperious persona—and a recipe for constant constitutional crises.

AT FIRST GLANCE, Lula hardly looks like a harbinger of greater stability. He made his name as the Lech Walesa of Brazil, an uneducated metalworker who stood up to his country's military dictators in the late '70s. On the stump during his three previous presidential tries, he fit the part of the radical, wearing flip-flops and a checked worker's shirt. His campaign trumpeted slogans that could have been generated by the Third International, like "Worker, Vote for a Worker." His agenda was as red as they come: redistribution of wealth, land reform, friendship with Cuba.

But, as happened with the American Democratic Party and British Labor Party, Lula has shifted toward the center over the last two years, albeit starting from a point much farther left on the spectrum. Roberto Pompeu de Toledo, a columnist at the newsweekly *Veja*, told me, "It is as simple as it looks. The party got sick of losing. They realized that they had to move closer to the center to have any chance of winning." Before standing for a fourth time, Lula secured an agreement with the leadership of the P.T.'s radical wing, nicknamed the

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The Saudis

Are they our friends . . . or our enemies?

For decades the U.S. has considered Saudi Arabia our friend—and an important source of oil. But now, because fifteen of nineteen of the September 11 hijackers were Saudi citizens, because Saudi schools and newspapers teach anti-American and anti-Semitic hatred, and because Saudi Arabia refuses to cooperate with U.S. efforts to stop terrorism, many are asking whether this "friendship" still makes sense.

What are the facts?

Militant Islam thrives in Saudi Arabia. Not only were most of the 9/11 terrorists Saudis, but some 80% of the prisoners held at Guantánamo are Saudis, Osama bin Laden is a Saudi, and recent evidence proves that Saudi Arabia has been a principal supporter both of al Qaeda and of Palestinian suicide bombers.

But these obvious connections to terrorism are just the beginning. The Saudis actively support more than 30,000 Wahhabi religious schools and mosques in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Western Europe and the United States. Wahhabism calls for the destruction of the United States and Israel and Western values, replacing them with totalitarian Islamist regimes and fundamentalist societies, similar to the one created by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

> "The U.S. must reconsider its relationship with Saudi Arabia. In the meantime, we must think of it as our enemy and consider this reality in our global fight against terrorism."

Despite friendly-sounding rhetoric from its leaders, the Saudi government refuses to assist the U.S. capture Islamic terrorists. In 1996, the Saudis refused a U.S. request that they seize Osama bin Laden. In 1995, they refused to hand over Imad Mughniyah, the likely perpetrator of the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon. After 9/11, the Saudis opposed the U.S. attack on the Taliban and have failed to crack down on their own al Qaeda supporters. No wonder the Saudi-supported press regularly praises terrorist actions against the U.S. and Israel, or that secret documents found recently prove that the Saudi government gives money to terrorist organizations and bestows handsome cash rewards on the families of suicide bombers in Israel.

It's also no wonder that a much-publicized report to a Pentagon advisory board recently concluded that "the Saudis are active at every level of the terror chain, from planners to financiers." The report labeled the kingdom "the most dangerous opponent of American interests in the Middle East."

Saudi Arabia rejects important basic human freedoms. Saudi Arabia is run by a totalitarian regime—the oil-rich House of Saud, a tyranny of princes and royal cousins. None of the basic freedoms held sacred by Western democracies—the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, rights for women, private property, free speech, equal justice, religious tolerance—is tolerated by the Saudis. Indeed, Saudi culture is barbarically restrictive: Woman may not drive and are treated as chattel by their husbands and by the regime; the press is ruthlessly censored; and public executions and dismemberments are still practiced. During the Gulf War, President Bush was prevented by the Saudi government from conducting a religious service on a U.S. military base on Saudi soil. U.S. servicewomen in Saudi Arabia must wear veils in public. Saudi men routinely abduct their U.S. citizen children, forcefully covert them to Islam and, if girls, press them into marriages – often polygamous ones.

The myth of our dependence on Saudi oil. Saudi oil policy has always been openly self-serving—the Saudis have threatened or implemented at least three oil embargoes over recent decades, including one in 1973-74 that triggered a deep economic crisis in the U.S. In reality, they have sold us oil when it served their financial and political purposes.

While at one time the U.S. relied heavily on the free flow of Saudi oil—since as much as 25% of the world's supply may lie within its boundaries—things have changed. Russia and Mexico have become reliable suppliers, and vast new oil fields around the Caspian Sea are coming on line. New energy technologies are reducing our dependence on oil in general. Finally, most analysts agree that the Saudis need the U.S. as their customer much more than we need them as a supplier. The Saudis are not likely to cut us off, and if they do, we can obtain plentiful oil from other sources.

Given its totalitarian policies, its open support of terrorism, and the anti-American, anti-Israel vitriol spewing daily from its state-sponsored press and religious institutions, the U.S. must reconsider its relationship with Saudi Arabia. It's time to acknowledge that the Saudis are effectively waging a war against us—that they are behaving like enemies. Fortunately, Saudi Arabia's reduced importance as a supplier to the U.S. now allows us to make decisions based on human rights and our greater strategic interests, rather than solely on our energy needs. Just as a change in regimes in Iraq would benefit the U.S. and the world, so would a change in the feudal regime in Saudi Arabia—the ousting of the royal ruling class. Above all, we should encourage our government to confront the hypocritical and dictatorial Saudi rulers. In addition, if we can find Saudis of valor and vision, we should encourage them to lead their country to democracy. In the meantime, we must consider Saudi Arabia our enemy and consider this reality in our global fight against terrorism.

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"Shiites," that they cease their demands for ideological purity. He began to make over his image, hiring a right-wing political consultant, Duda Mendonça, the Brazilian Dick Morris. Soon his whole look morphed: fine suits, a carefully cropped beard, a more subdued style on the trail. There was substance to the change, too. Lula minimized the Shiites' power, replacing the party leadership with unabashed pragmatists—like P.T. President José Dirceu—who have no ties to radical public-sector unions. He made a textile magnate from a conservative, evangelical party his running mate. To showcase its new centrism, the P.T. published a "manifesto" in late July that made no mention of socialism. It promised fidelity to Cardoso-style economics, honoring debt payment and maintaining current anti-inflationary mechanisms. And Lula has adopted a new slogan in his speeches, repeating, "There's nothing more pragmatic in the world than Brazilian society"—a subtle assurance that he has no interest in nationalizing industry or rousing the proletariat. De Souza, a moderate, says, "In essence, the P.T. economic program isn't different from Serra's. They've come a long way."

Lula's critics claim that the change is nothing more than Mendonça's cosmetics, that Lula showed his true stripes last December when he made a pilgrimage to kiss Fidel Castro's ring in Havana. Writing in *The Weekly Standard*, Hudson Institute's Constantine Menges warned that the event presaged a new anti-American alliance. A Lula election, he thundered, "would be a major setback for freedom." But Menges neglected to mention the details of this visit. Castro had used the meeting to prod Lula leftward. "Why don't you adopt the Cuban model?" the dictator asked. "Cuba is not a model for Brazil," Lula responded. "We prefer pluralistic, competitive elections." After finishing their conversation, Lula headed to a meeting with a group of Brazilian businessmen who were visiting Havana. Long live the revolution. ■

On the Hill

Hidden Profit

By Michael Crowley

Speaking before a room of political reporters in early August, Jim Jordan, the executive director of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, said something impolitic. Jordan was co-hosting a briefing on the upcoming midterm elections, and his mood was upbeat: The war on terrorism had grown quiet. Corporate scandal and stock market chaos had driven down the president's popularity and contributed to voter angst. Politics had moved out of the war room and back to the kitchen table. The onetime assumption that Republicans would thrive in November looked obsolete. "Clearly something is going on out there," Jordan concluded.

But when a reporter asked whether war and terrorism might yet reclaim the agenda before Election Day, Jordan, a blunt-speaking veteran of hardball politics, offered a sardonic response: "You mean when General [Karl] Rove calls in the air strikes in October?" The crack drew nervous laughter—*did he really say that?*—but Jordan made it clear he took the notion seriously, if not quite literally. "I hope I'm wrong," he added. "Certainly none of us want to think that the administration, for domestic political reasons, would use the war. I think the temptation will be strong."

Republicans seethed over Jordan's quip. But today few Democrats doubt its prescience. Even if party leaders don't yet agree on what to say about the war on Iraq—"There's not a plan," says a senior aide to one Democratic senator—they're largely united on one point: what the aide calls the "widespread" sentiment that "General Rove" has manufactured an urgent debate over Iraq in order to win seats in Congress this fall. As one party operative puts it, the White House is "play[ing] domestic politics in the international community."

It's not just whispering operatives who are making the "September surprise" case. Some prominent Democrats are airing it more publicly, hoping the media will catch on. Last week, for instance, former Clinton White House spokesman Joe Lockhart told CNN that the war talk "has more to do with politics, because I think they were very, very anxious to change the subject away from the economy and the corporate ... scandals." Even Tom Daschle made the case last week. "I think that we do have to worry about the politicization of this issue," Daschle told reporters on September 4, in his typically understated manner. "And I think that there are skeptics out there who wonder to what extent the political implications of any of this may affect the elections." (Daschle later took care to add, rather implausibly, that he is not "one who shares the view that it is being politicized.") This week Democrats also took swipes at the administration for politicizing the September 11 anniversary more generally. The Democratic National Committee, for instance, issued a press release attacking Dick Cheney for "cheapen[ing]" a "sacred" day by granting a September 11 interview to the "partisan and divisive" Rush Limbaugh.

Tough stuff. But Democrats say they stopped giving the White House the benefit of the doubt earlier this year, after Bush officials seemed to respond to questions about missed September 11 warning signs with a series of overhyped terror alerts. The administration's hastily cobbled-together Homeland Security Department proposal, they recall, was conveniently released the day FBI whistle-blower Colleen Rowley delivered her embarrassing testimony before Congress.

Democrats feel the same dynamic is at work in this month's Iraq push. (One operative dubs the White House's current efforts "Scare America II.") Party loyalists seized upon, for instance, a September 7 *New York Times* article that depicted a highly calculated White House strategy to market an attack on Iraq. Quoting officials such as Rove and Chief of Staff Andy Card, the article reported that the Bushies had long planned to press their Iraq case this fall—meaning their insistence on a quick congressional vote was therefore not solely a response to summer nay-saying about

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Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

A Sense of Security

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

This spring, I visited the new Jewish Museum in Berlin. The building, the work of American architect Daniel Libeskind, is extraordinary, but the Garden of Exile is especially powerful. It is a maze of forty-nine concrete pillars, with trees growing out of their tops. No surface in the garden is completely horizontal or vertical, so you feel unsteady and disoriented as you walk among the concrete trees. The Garden of Exile is a statement about the wanderings of the Jewish people, but it also made me think about the uncertainty that Americans now feel as they look back to a more innocent time that disappeared only a year ago.

We have gone from the comfortable existence we enjoyed before September 11, 2001, to a new and unfamiliar world where we are constantly kept off balance with warnings about terrorist attacks that could come at any time. Those in charge seek to reassure and protect us, but they can't tell us what form attacks might take or how best to protect ourselves and our children. This sense of exile from a past in which we felt secure is difficult for everyone, but it is especially hard for young people.

Just how hard was made clear in a recent study of schoolchildren from all over New York City: Eighty-seven percent suffered from serious anxiety in the six months following the attack. Of course, these are children whose own city was attacked, but the emotional impact of September 11th did not stop at the Hudson River. If we need proof of that, we can find it in *Messages to Ground Zero*, a collection of letters written by schoolchildren from all over the country (and elsewhere in the world) to New York children. One child put it this way: "It was very scary here in Ohio, so it must have been VERY, VERY scary in New York."

Reassuring Lessons

How can we help young people deal with this changed world? Our schools and families have to be strong for our children. As for the controversy over lesson plans about September 11th, while schools need to teach tolerance and provide counseling for youngsters who are troubled, the real job of education is to teach about our unique democracy and the truth about its enemies. But the most important and reassuring lessons will come from the way our nation and its leaders deal with the uncertainties of the post-September 11th world.

Young people learned about heroism from people who died on September 11th and from the rescuers and the others who continued to work at ground zero long after the terrible day. Our kids discovered, too, that their country was strong and resolute and that it would not allow its citizens to be victims of terrorists. We would take the fight to its source and attempt to destroy those responsible for September 11th while we also fought to free the Afghan people from the Taliban regime. That we could do these things has helped our children believe in the future.

We need to be strong for our children in the post-9/11 world.

And while we don't usually think of foreign policy as something children care much about, they learn an important lesson when we defend ourselves militarily while we also help build democratic institutions and support economic growth in developing nations. They learn that military strength, democracy at home and abroad, and caring for others are compatible—and that all are necessary.

Building Democracy

The U.S. can and should spend adequately on our military while still meeting our domestic needs, which include quality education and decent health care. We can and should do more to eradicate poverty—not just at home, but across the globe. It's a mistake to blame terrorism on poverty; totalitarian murderers, as we have seen, often have quite a few resources at hand. But terrorism does find fertile ground in places where ordinary people cannot exercise basic rights and where they often go to bed hungry. History teaches us that democracy and prosperity are most likely to bring peace. Yet America gives far less than many other countries in foreign aid, and we don't do nearly enough to build democracy.

A year after September 11th, Americans are facing an enormous task, with no end in sight: We must not only protect and defend our country but also take the lead in creating a more prosperous and more democratic world. As we consider what all this will involve, the ground still seems unsteady beneath our feet. But using our strength and our wealth to create a peaceful planet is our obligation to our children and, indeed, to all the children of the world. ▮

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a war. Indeed, Card told the paper that the White House had resisted beginning its p.r. offensive before Labor Day. "From a marketing point of view," Card said, "you don't introduce new products in August." (The line, says the Democratic operative, is "both grotesque and telling.") Recently, several Democrats have complained that while the administration claims to be presenting "new" evidence, nothing released thus far indicates any real change in Washington's understanding of the Iraqi threat. After Cheney and other officials indicated that Iraq was making swift progress toward building a nuclear weapon, for instance, a study by the highly regarded International Institute for Strategic Studies suggested that Saddam Hussein is still years away from developing a bomb on his own. And a mere two days after Cheney ominously said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that "new information has come to light" about possible links between Baghdad and Al Qaeda, *The Washington Post* ran a page-one story saying that the CIA "has yet to find convincing evidence" of such a connection and that the White House had dropped that argument in talks with world leaders.

FOR DEMOCRATS, THE problem with the "Scare America" complaint is that, whatever its merits, it makes them look as if they're afraid of an honest debate on Iraq. That's why elected Democrats will go no farther than Daschle's lame reference to "skeptics out there." Still, most in the party feel that they don't have a lot of other options. They can try to postpone a floor debate on the war until after the elections, probably by dragging out committee hearings in the name of sober deliberation—or, as Daschle has begun to suggest, on the grounds that Congress waited until just after the 1990 elections to vote on the Gulf war. But if the president begins to hint—as few doubt he would—that Congress is delaying battle plans, that won't be easy. It's not even clear that a delay, which drags out the debate and calls attention to Democratic intransigence, is in the party's best interests. "The most expedient thing would be to introduce a resolution ourselves and pass it right away," says one House leadership aide. Then the Democrats could get back to bread-and-butter topics like pension reform and the minimum wage.

But it's not entirely clear that an Iraq debate would be the debacle that many flustered Dems now fear. Hopeful party operatives recall that Democrats handily won the governorships of New Jersey and Virginia two months after September 11. Though there's a difference between state and federal office—"no one expected [gubernatorial candidates] to have a position on U.N. weapons inspectors," says one Democratic House aide—the outcomes seemed to show that, even as ground zero still smoldered, voters still gave high priority to more pedestrian concerns like health care.

True, a vote on military action could be painful for those vulnerable Democratic incumbents whose consciences might not match public opinion back home. It's hard to imagine Minnesota liberal Paul Wellstone voting for an attack, no matter what the polls say. But Democratic strategists list several other candidates who might be *helped* by the opportunity to show their national security bona fides. Georgia Democrat Max Cleland, for instance, has been trying to fend off suggestions that he's a closet liberal. A vote with Bush on Iraq "could seal that [race]," says a Democratic campaign consultant. In Arkansas, Democratic candidate Mark Pryor, trying hard to show Southern conservative credentials in his race against incumbent Tim Hutchinson, has already said that he believes "we should go into Iraq." That sort of dynamic could also help several Democratic House candidates in pro-war rural areas.

Equally important, there are Republicans for whom an Iraq vote would be less than convenient. GOP Senator Gordon Smith of Oregon, for instance, has seen his reelection in that liberal state grow increasingly uncertain; a vote for war could highlight his conservatism at an inopportune moment. Democrats note that in several isolationist pockets of the Midwest, mountain West, and Southwest, Republicans could find themselves in uncomfortable positions—witness the strong doubts already expressed about an invasion by otherwise rock-ribbed conservatives such as Dick Armey of Texas, Larry Craig of Idaho, and Chuck Hagel of Nebraska. Some House Democrats suspect that House Speaker Dennis Hastert's hedging on a pre-November Iraq vote may be due to pressure from conservative isolationists like Armey.

A vote on Iraq might even wind up helping the Democratic crop of presidential contenders. Nothing benefits John Kerry more, for instance, than an opportunity to remind voters of his military record—even if some Democrats complain that he's simultaneously styling himself as both a hawk and a dove. Dick Gephardt, who found himself on the wrong side of the 1991 Iraq debate, has taken pains not to stand out as a voice of dissent this time. John Edwards, too, could use some hawkish credentials if he hopes the South will carry him to the White House. But no Democrat will outflank Joe Lieberman, who—despite reports that he softened his position at a breakfast with reporters last week—would still support unilateral action against Iraq if necessary, according to his spokesman. (Curiously, it is Al Gore, one of the few Democrats to vote for war in 1991, who has been among the harshest critics of the administration's war plans.)

In an ideal scenario, Democrats could wind up with the best of both worlds: pro-war votes that shore up the party's pathetic national security credentials *and* gains in midterm elections dominated by domestic issues. It's not a crazy notion. Consider this excerpt from the October 29, 1990, *New York Times*, one week before midterm elections and in the midst of obvious war preparations in the Persian Gulf: "[B]uoyed by Mr. Bush's showdown with Saddam Hussein of Iraq, Republicans actually thought they might defy the normal law of politics and pick up seats at the middle of the presidential term," the *Times* explained. "Now they are talking about minimizing their losses." Thanks largely to a weak economy, the GOP went on to lose eight seats in the House and one in the Senate. Two months later, in January 1991, some Democrats went on to cast Gulf war votes they sorely regret. But few of them are likely to repeat that mistake again. All of which suggests that for Democrats, the Iraq debate might bring less pain and more gain than anyone expects. ■

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~ Since marijuana remains detectable for as long as a month (while alcohol, heroin and cocaine for only a day or two[1]), testing will encourage students and workers to switch to more dangerous drugs. Can you imagine anything dumber?

~ The most effective method of preventing adolescent drug abuse is keeping youths active and learning after school when many parents are working and kids are not supervised.[2] Why would we want to put up barriers to kids participating in after school activities?

~ The most effective schools put in place a student assistance program that allows youngsters to anonymously seek or be referred to counseling if they show signs of problems. Shouldn't students perceive school administrators as their mentors rather than an extension of the police?

~ Based on 9% of schools that have some form of drug testing, the National Academy of Sciences reports: **"there is no scientific evidence regarding the effects of these programs, either on drug use or on the learning environment."**[3]

~ One school system rejected testing when it found it would cost $8 million annually to test its 75,000 athletes at its 171 high schools.[4] That's $46,000 per high school . . . $106 per student tested.

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[1] Hawks and Chiang, "Examples of Specific Drug Assays, Urine Testing for Drugs of Abuse", Research Monograph No. 73 (1986); McBay, "Interpretation of Blood and Urine Cannabinoid Concentrations", 33 J. Forensic Sci 875-83 (1988); Ambre, J. et al, "Urinary Excretion of Cocaine Berzoylecgonine and Ecgonine Methyl Ester in Human", J. Analytical Toxicology (1988); Ellis et al, "Excretion Patterns of Cannabinoid Metabolites After Last Use in a Group of Chronic Users, 38 Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics", 572-78 (1985).

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White House Watch

Call to Arms

By Ryan Lizza

The last time Charles Boyd had a big idea was a couple of years ago. The retired Air Force general and former Vietnam fighter pilot was serving as executive director of an obscure committee originally hatched by Newt Gingrich and chaired by a pair of has-been politicians. Even its name—the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century—seemed to conjure up images of one of those useless Beltway blue-ribbon commissions that serve as welfare programs for ex-government officials.

And that's how the media treated it. In 1999 the commission warned in its first report, "The combination of unconventional weapons proliferation with the persistence of international terrorism will end the relative invulnerability of the U.S. homeland to catastrophic attack. A direct attack against American citizens on American soil is likely over the next quarter-century." Boyd went to the editorial-page boards of the major dailies trying to drum up interest in the report's dire warnings. "They yawned," he says. Early last year the commission released its final report, which talked about "homeland security"—an issue so grave, the report argued, that the Bush administration should create a whole new Cabinet-level agency to deal with it. When he held a press conference to discuss the report, Boyd says, "One guy from *The New York Times* got up and left, saying this wasn't newsworthy." Of course, after September 11 that all changed. Within hours of the attacks, the same opinion pages that had paid so little attention were asking Boyd to pen op-eds on terrorism. His panel, widely known as the Hart-Rudman Commission, became Exhibit A in discussions about the country's missed warning signs.

Last week, as the Bush administration planned for the president's speech to the United Nations and debated how to approach the issue of returning U.N. weapons inspectors to Iraq, Boyd set the insular world of Washington foreign policy alight with a new idea. Working with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; its president, Jessica Mathews; and a slew of arms control and Middle East experts over the last six months, Boyd came up with the idea of "coercive inspections." This time people paid attention. Before the report's release, Condoleezza Rice, George W. Bush's national security adviser, agreed to meet with Mathews and Boyd for 20 minutes. They ended up staying for an hour. This week they are scheduled to present the idea to senior U.N. officials and to some members of the Security Council. Administration opponents of the plan have become worried enough that they have moved to kill it in its crib.

The plan calls for sending weapons inspectors back into Iraq accompanied by their own army. Inspectors, now known as the U.N. Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), would return with a new Inspections Implementation Force (IIF) that would be created by the U.N. Security Council. Instead of getting bogged down in the kinds of petty negotiations with obstructionist Iraqi officials that crippled the previous inspections regime, UNMOVIC would use the threat of force to gain entry into sites suspected of producing or stockpiling prohibited weapons. Failing that, it could shoot its way in or call in air strikes to destroy the site.

Whether or not Bush presses for a U.N.-sponsored military force to support UNMOVIC (The New Republic goes to press before Bush's September 12 speech to the United Nations), the Boyd plan and proposals like it have been warmly received by moderates in the administration—and have hawks deeply worried and on the defensive. "Interest in the plan was instant and international," says one White House adviser who backs coercive inspections. "It scared the hell out of the hard-liners." A Pentagon source shoots back contemptuously: "The same people throwing up roadblocks [to military action] are backing this. People at the State Department see it as a nice compromise."

The plan to reenergize weapons inspections could not have come at a better time for Bush moderates. Ever since James Baker called for the president to seek U.N. support for action against Iraq in late August, multilateralism has been in ascendance. On August 26 Dick Cheney pushed back, declaring that "a person would be right to question any suggestion that we should just get inspectors back into Iraq." But only three days later—after Secretary of State Colin Powell told the BBC, "The president has been clear that he believes weapons inspectors should return"—Cheney backtracked, pushing the administration's new pro-U.N. position, declaring that the "objective [of inspections] has to be disarmament." The Boyd plan was released in the midst of this public argument—and just as Bush was emphasizing a multilateral approach in preparation for his U.N. appearance. Noting the sudden turn of events, Chris Nelson, the author of a daily trade and foreign policy newsletter that tracks the Iraq debate, points out, "Until last week [Secretary of Defense Donald] Rumsfeld, Cheney and other neo-con hawks were calling for unilateral invasion of Iraq without the need for congressional approval."

For hawks, the problem with coercive inspections or any other serious plan for the return of UNMOVIC is that it represents a retreat from a bedrock principle: regime change. Proponents of reinvigorated inspections are explicit about this. The only reason Saddam Hussein would ever allow intrusive inspections is if he believes that they are his only chance at survival. So if failure to comply would trigger a full invasion and his ouster, then real compliance would have to assure Saddam that his regime would be spared. Boyd argues that "the objective of the United Nations—and the United States—should be to disable rather than remove him." A similar idea put forward by three scholars from The Brookings Institution points out that such a plan "means accepting the

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possibility that Saddam will for now remain leader of Iraq." Even Patrick Clawson of the hawkish Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and one of the leading thinkers about how to build a new Iraq after Saddam, supports the return of inspectors backed by the threat of force, even though it could, he notes, "leave Saddam in power."

THIS FIGHT ISN'T new. The conflict between the U.S. policy of regime change and the U.N. policy of disarmament goes back to the Gulf war, when Bush 41 decided not to march on Baghdad because of the lack of international support. While the U.N. always contemplated the end of sanctions once Iraq complied with the relevant resolutions, Bush père stated in 1991 that sanctions would never be lifted until Saddam was gone. The Clinton administration originally softened this approach. It emphasized regime change to domestic audiences; but in order to maintain support for sanctions in the Security Council—where Iraq gained support from China, Russia, and France—it pushed for Iraqi compliance with U.N. resolutions, not deposing Saddam. Bill Clinton tried to bridge this divide by arguing that as long as Saddam was in power he would never bring Iraq into compliance. As the '90s progressed, regime change became more of a priority for the United States and less of one for the Security Council. The gap between the United Nations and the United States became most obvious in 1998, the last year inspectors were in Iraq. Saddam's U.N. friends advocated softening sanctions and inspections even as Congress toughened its stance, passing the Iraq Liberation Act, codifying regime change as official U.S. policy for the first time.

But since September 11, two things have brought the Security Council and the United States closer together again. Russia and the United States have grown friendlier, and Bush's apparent intention to act unilaterally has threatened to permanently marginalize the Security Council. So like Clinton, Bush is now attempting to bridge the gap. Over the last few weeks U.S. officials, realizing that rhetoric about preemptive attacks and crusades to overthrow Middle East dictatorships were clouding the debate, have subtly shifted their emphasis from ousting Saddam to ensuring that his country gets rid of weapons of mass destruction. The mantra on Iraq leading up to Bush's speech this week was disarmament, not regime change. This is either a real shift in policy or a tactic to gain international support for war. Either way, the administration is trying to cast its own goals in terms that are more consistent with the U.N.'s. In doing so, Bush has tried to change Iraq from a U.S. problem into a U.N. problem. That way, if Saddam triggers the use of force by not complying on inspections, the United States can emphasize that its actions to remove him are still just a means of bringing Iraq into compliance with the relevant U.N. resolutions.

The hawks, of course, still don't believe that disarmament and compliance with U.N. mandates are the goals. They have grander ambitions. They want to overthrow Saddam and democratize Iraq as a first step toward remaking the Middle East. They care as much about those living under Saddam's rule as they do about Saddam's weapons. To them, a policy that would potentially ensure Saddam's survival in exchange for ridding his country of weapons of mass destruction is immoral and won't work anyway, so it's not worth the cost in credibility of backing off of regime change. The moderates argue that if the U.S. approach to the U.N. is perceived strictly as a way to establish a predicate for war, then the United States will gain none of the benefits of multilateralism and might as well not even bother. But if there is going to be a deal at the U.N., the Security Council will have to accede to the possibility of war, and Bush will have to give Saddam a final chance at staying in power. The moderates still think they have the momentum to pull this off. As Boyd points out, it took the administration a while to back his homeland security plan too. ■

The Pentagon v. the CIA on Iraq.

Need to Know

By ELI J. LAKE

IF THE BUSH administration's preparations for war with Saddam Hussein were proceeding appropriately, the president would probably be curling up right now with something called a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) for Iraq. An NIE is a document pooling all the information on a particular country that U.S. intelligence services have collected from overheard phone calls, satellite photos, decrypted e-mails, defectors, paid informants, foreign intelligence services, diplomat tipsters, newspaper articles, and official speeches. It is supposed to serve as a consensus assessment of the state's conventional and unconventional military capabilities, political stability, links to terrorism, and domestic economy. While an NIE is drafted in collaboration with the entire U.S. intelligence community, its lead author is the CIA.

An NIE for Iraq would consolidate exactly the sort of

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information George W. Bush needs at his fingertips before deciding how best to conduct a war against Saddam. (His father had the benefit of one before the Gulf war.) If, for example, the intelligence community believes massive defections are likely at the start of an American bombing campaign or that Kurdish *peshmerga* fighters could be trained quickly to communicate with U.S. helicopters providing close air support, then it might make sense to pursue an Afghanistan-style campaign in Iraq, relying primarily on aerial bombing and indigenous forces. If, by contrast, the NIE concluded that these risks were too great and would likely result in massive casualties for our side, it could tip the scales toward a ground invasion and a strategy to essentially occupy Baghdad.

But this is all mere speculation, because there is no NIE for Iraq and there probably won't be one anytime soon. The reason for this omission is that the Iraq hawks running the Pentagon and staffing the office of the vice president long ago lost faith in the CIA analysis. So they set up their own network for analyzing and collecting intelligence regarding Iraq and have been presenting it to the president themselves. The result is that instead of Bush receiving one assessment of the facts on the ground, he has for months been receiving two—one (more cautious) from the CIA and the other (more optimistic) from the Iraq hawks. As one former CIA analyst says, "Not since Vietnam has there been as deep a divide over intelligence as to enemy capabilities as you are seeing now in Iraq." The administration's confusion on Iraq, in other words, goes even deeper than its critics understand. It's not just that different factions in the administration disagree about U.S. policy vis-à-vis Saddam. They disagree about the fundamental facts on which that policy should be based.

THE CURRENT SCHISM has roots going back to the early '70s. In 1974 a collection of neoconservative foreign policy intellectuals on the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board began attacking the CIA-authored NIEs for the Soviet Union, accusing the Agency of cooking its books to defend Henry Kissinger's policy of détente by underestimating Soviet military expenditures.

So the group—which included Harvard historian Richard Pipes; former arms control negotiator and ambassador-at-large under President Ronald Reagan, Paul H. Nitze; the retired director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Daniel Graham; and a then-little-known staff member of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Paul Wolfowitz—asked the CIA for access to the Agency's files to create their own assessment of Soviet intentions and capabilities. In 1976 they received that access from then-CIA Director George H.W. Bush. That fall the group—which came to be known as Team B—produced an intelligence assessment for the president, contending that the Soviet Union's military expenditures would not be curtailed by concerns over their potential impact on the USSR's economic health. That conclusion became the cornerstone of Reagan's policy for outspending the Soviet military in order to hasten the collapse of the Soviet economy.

Fast-forward to the current day. Wolfowitz, now deputy secretary of defense, still doesn't trust the CIA—but this time the bone of contention is Iraq. As during his tenure on Team B, Wolfowitz finds himself amid a loose network of neocons inside and outside government—this time including his boss, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld; Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton; Chairman of the Defense Policy Board Richard Perle; and Vice President Dick Cheney's Chief of Staff and national security adviser I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby—arguing for an aggressive foreign policy posture. So, in a repetition of history, the neocons have devoted themselves to offering an alternative to what they see as the CIA's timid and inaccurate intelligence assessments—assessments that downplayed the possibility of Al Qaeda sleeper cells in the United States prior to September 11; failed to predict India's nuclear tests in 1998; and underestimated the speed with which the North Koreans would be able to test a multistage missile. The difference is that this time the neocons don't have to ask the CIA's permission to gain access to classified intelligence, because Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld already control between 85 percent and 90 percent of the U.S. intelligence budget, including the agencies responsible for signal intercepts, satellite surveillance, and the DIA. "This is a case of going in-house because [Rumsfeld] is not happy with the intelligence he's gotten from the CIA," says Melvin Goodman, a professor of international security at the National War College and a former CIA analyst.

Drawing on raw intelligence from these sources and from the CIA, the testimony of Iraqi defectors, and reports from the Iraqi opposition, Wolfowitz and his allies have put together a portrait of Iraq's military might and political stability that diverges dramatically from the CIA's. For example, the hawks believe that most Iraqis will join American efforts to liberate their country in the event of a U.S. attack and that Saddam has extensive links to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network. The CIA is not so sure. The hawks contend that "as soon as the fight starts large forces will defect," says former CIA Near East Division Chief Frank Anderson. "What evidence is there for that? While many Iraqis defected in the Gulf war, hundreds of thousands died in the war with Iran."

The existence of two competing assessments of the threat posed by Iraq need not by itself be counterproductive—if there were some constructive give-and-take between the two sides that produced a rough consensus upon which the president could rely. But to a large degree, there isn't. Bush administration staffers complain they have been completely cut out of the loop and that most decisions on Iraq policy take place among high-level officials who are strongly wedded to their existing positions. "You have this group of obscenely secretive principals and deputies meeting, who don't let their staff in," one source close to the administration says. Indeed the interagency committee on Iraq policy, which is supposed to bring together and synthesize the views of the Pentagon, uniformed military, CIA, State

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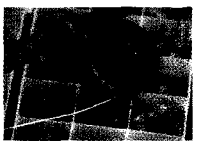

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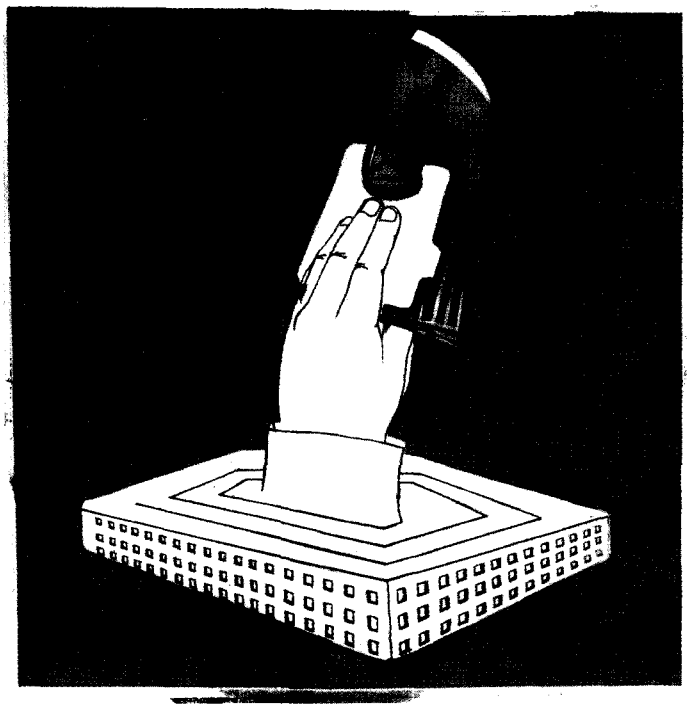
Department, and National Security Council, has not met since June—perhaps in part because it has been chaired by State Department Director of Policy Planning Richard N. Haass and later by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs Ryan Crocker, both of whom are perceived as hostile to the hawks' view on Iraq. The upshot, says Anderson, is that "there is no consensus in the [intelligence] community about the basic questions of threat."

CENTRAL TO THE intelligence-gathering apparatus constructed by the hawks has been the Iraqi National Congress (INC). An umbrella group for Kurdish, Sunni, Shiite, Hashemite, and exiled military opposition groups, the INC has been receiving overt funding from the U.S. government since 1999, one year after President Bill Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act establishing regime change as an explicit goal of U.S. policy. At the beginning of the second Bush administration the INC began receiving funds for an intelligence operation inside Iraq known as the Information Collection Program (ICP). The ICP began after Francis Brooke, the INC's Washington adviser and the chief analyst for the program, convinced the State Department's then-coordinator for regime transition in Iraq, Frank Ricciardone, to grant his organization a temporary treasury license to use U.S. funding for operations inside Iraq by promising to retrieve information on Iraqi war crimes against Kurds.



The network began renewing contacts inside the country that led to a string of twelve defections. Further INC operations inside Iraqi territory were technically prohibited by the State Department, but they nonetheless continued. Despite numerous complaints from Crocker, the ICP network, which is controlled exclusively by INC executive committee member Ahmed Chalabi and funded with $320,000 per month from the State Department, has continued to run operations on the ground in Iraq. The ICP is responsible for the stream of defectors who have shared revelations about Saddam's weapons-of-mass-destruction program and his links to the Al Qaeda network with *The New York Times*, CBS's "60 Minutes," and *Vanity Fair* over the last year. But the network has also provided target information to the Pentagon, intelligence from assets inside Iraq's intelligence services, and even photographs of senior Iraqi officials and their families at parties. The ICP has also conducted some small-scale sabotage operations, blowing up sections of the pipeline between Iraq and Syria that provides Saddam with the illicit cash the dictator has used to bolster his nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons capacity. And Chalabi's intelligence network has offered regular reports to the Pentagon and the vice president's office, apparently influencing the positions Rumsfeld and Cheney have taken in the administration's internal debates on Iraq policy.

Shortly after Wolfowitz took his post in February 2001, for example, Chalabi and Brooke brought 1994 defector Khidir Hamza, one of Saddam's most senior nuclear scientists, to meet the new deputy defense secretary. In the meeting, Hamza described how Saddam was trying to refine uranium for his nuclear program using a centrifuge technique in small labs scattered throughout the country. Initially, there had been skepticism within the intelligence community—and specifically the CIA—that Saddam could be refining uranium in this way. But Hamza was insistent, claiming that Baghdad was purchasing from abroad a specific kind of aluminum tube needed for the process. And ultimately, Hamza's intelligence seems to have been borne out. Just last week, *The New York Times* published an article reporting that "[i]n the last 14 months, Iraq has sought to buy thousands of specially designed aluminum tubes, which American officials believe were intended as components of centrifuges to enrich uranium."

Nor is Saddam's nuclear program the only area in which the Iraq hawks have used the testimony of INC-sponsored defectors to challenge CIA assumptions about Iraq. Such testimony, according to administration officials, forms the basis of the Pentagon's assessment that members of Al Qaeda have used Iraq as a base for training both before and after the September 11 attacks. The Iraq hawks have relied on the classified testimony of two former Iraqi intelligence officers—interviewed in a *New York Times* story from November 8, 2001—who claimed that Saddam was using a base south of Baghdad, in an agricultural community called Salman Pak, to train non-Iraqi Arabs in hijacking and other black arts of terrorism. Although he declined to provide specifics, Rumsfeld reaffirmed the Pentagon's view at an August 20 news conference: "[W]hat I have said is a fact—that there are Al Qaeda in a number of locations in Iraq."

The CIA, however, is unconvinced. While the Agency

DANIEL BEJAR

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accepts that Ansar al-Islam—a terrorist group that attempted to assassinate the prime minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Barham Salih, this year—trained in Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and is supported by Baghdad, the Agency doubts that senior members of bin Laden's organization are living in Saddam's Iraq. "There is not evidence of Al Qaeda training there in Salman Pak," one senior U.S. intelligence official says.

The CIA's doubts stem largely from its mistrust of some of the defectors provided by the INC. "Some [defectors] are valuable, and there are some that had their talking points sharpened before they meet with U.S. officials," a senior U.S. intelligence official says. "For some defectors who have been out of the country, their stories get more and more colorful as time goes on." One of the defectors who formed the basis of the *Times'* piece on Salman Pak, for example, was met with skepticism when interviewed by the CIA in Ankara last September, according to a source familiar with the proceedings. Agents peppered the man with questions like "Why are you working for the INC? Who wrote this story for you?" said the source. According to former CIA Director R. James Woolsey, who worked on this defection as a private citizen, "Their principal interest seemed to be not his links to Al Qaeda but what his ties were to the INC."

THE CIA'S ANTIPATHY toward the INC dates back to Clinton-era efforts to topple Saddam. The CIA has long believed that Chalabi was responsible for compromising a 1996 coup attempt in which the CIA provided technical communications equipment for a network of military officers recruited by Ayad Alawi, the head of the Iraqi National Accord, a CIA-sponsored opposition group that has been at odds with the INC since the early '90s.

Chalabi flew to Washington in March 1996 to brief then-CIA Director John Deutch on information he had suggesting the upcoming coup attempt was compromised because Saddam knew the names of the plotters. Perle, then a private consultant, attended the meeting and suggested an independent evaluation of the planned coup by the CIA and Alawi. But Deutch declined the advice and allowed the coup effort to go forward. In June 1996 Saddam's men rounded up the plotters, killed them, and used the Agency's own equipment to beam praises of Saddam to the CIA's office in Amman. Many members of the CIA believe that because Chalabi had predicted these events, he must have had a hand in them.

With the Bush administration gearing up for war this summer, CIA and INC officials met twice in what could have been a constructive effort to overcome past animosity and improve cooperation on intelligence gathering. The meetings did not end conclusively. The first took place in June, when the CIA's Iraq Issues Group requested and received a meeting with INC chief of intelligence Aras Karem. The purpose was to establish a system whereby the Agency would get first crack at the defectors the INC was making available to the media. The meeting was hastily arranged in 24 hours and Karem received a visa the following day. Meeting at a hotel in Dupont Circle, Karem told the group about four future defectors who could be of interest to the U.S. government and offered the CIA access to them.

In July, the CIA asked for a follow-up meeting with the INC, though this time Karem could not attend. In this meeting the INC shared a briefing drafted by Karem on the state of the defectors program. But the meeting ended when the INC officials were informed that they would have no further formal contacts with the CIA; their intelligence program would instead interface only with the Pentagon through the DIA.

Had the CIA established a system for vetting INC defectors, perhaps the Agency and the president's more hawkish advisers might have reached some consensus on intelligence estimates. As it stands, the hawks within the administration believe a military campaign in Iraq will be pretty easy. As Cheney said on NBC's "Meet the Press" last Sunday, "I'm confident that if it became necessary—if the president felt that this was the right course of action so that he instructed the military to undertake this—that the U.S. military would be enormously effective in this circumstance. And I don't think it would be that tough a fight; that is, I don't think there's any question that we would prevail, and we would achieve our objective." The hawks also continue to push a military strategy that would rely heavily on U.S.-trained indigenous forces inside Iraq to do most of the ground fighting in conjunction with close American air support. The strategy relies on a promise that the Iranians will not interfere—a promise the mullahs delivered through Chalabi himself last month when the Iraqi opposition met with Rumsfeld, Cheney, and senior State Department officials.

But one former CIA official who maintains close contacts with his old employers calls this a strategy of "wish fulfillment." "They are arguing for a high-risk strategy," this official says. "It relies on the military capabilities of an internal opposition, the kindness of evil strangers ... and it embraces the one strategy for regime change all of our allies have told us they do not support." But while the CIA is skeptical of the intelligence the hawks have received through the INC, their own on-the-ground information is woeful. Says a retired CIA officer critical of the extent to which the Agency has shunned the Iraqi opposition, "Unless you are working with all of the opposition networks intensively ... then you won't have a clue as to what the overall picture is inside the country—what people are thinking, what you need to do when you go in, who counts, who is respected, the mood of the army, and who is important in the army."

For now it appears Bush is inclined to believe the hawks' analysis, privileging the information provided by the INC's defectors and analyzed by the Pentagon over the warnings of his spies, diplomats, and generals. As the president prepares to make his case for attacking Iraq to the international community and Congress, he will argue that the time to act is now and that waiting would be more costly than quick action. The conclusion may well be right. But the process that produced it is far from reassuring. ■

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Facsimile Lives

THE HEROINE'S NAME is a contraction of the term Simulation One. **Simone** (New Line) is a picture about a computer-generated film star, a comedy, I suppose, but one that, because of its subject, grinds away inside the head like a fact we wish didn't exist. The screenplay was written and directed by Andrew Niccol, who wrote *Gattaca* and *The Truman Show*. Thus he is a seasoned explorer of that frigid territory into which the world seems to be sliding, the area where reality is less a philosophical question and more a matter of doorknobs. Is this really a doorknob? Am I really grasping it? Is that my hand? And what do the terms "doorknob" and "hand" reliably mean? The examining of the real is no longer merely an academic pursuit; it is now a matter of getting up in the morning with some sense of surety.

So the theme of *Simone* could hardly be more immediate. But the screenplay that Niccol has devised to deploy it is as creaky as the idea is pressing. At the start, a veteran Hollywood director, Viktor Taransky, is canned by his studio chief, who happens to be his ex-wife (creak number one). Taransky's recent pictures have flopped, and now the star of his current project quits on him, so he is through. Out of nowhere a scientific genius suddenly approaches him (number two) and thrusts on him computer materials, then disappears to die (number three). Taransky, puzzled, disconsolate, slips the material into a computer and finds that he has been given the means to create a beautiful screen star, whom he names Simone. She is gorgeous, sexy, can do anything, can sound like anyone, if Taransky just touches the right keys. Saved!

Taransky proceeds with his planned film, using Simone as the star and keeping her computer-creation a tight secret. The other actors in the film never meet her. She says, via Taransky, that she cannot work with anyone else, and he provides a body double for the scenes she has with others; he later digitalizes Simone into those scenes in place of the double. The picture is finished, is released, and smashes to stratospheric success.

More smashes follow. Simone becomes Marilyn Monroe to the super-nth degree. The only interviews that she gives are done on television from her home, with the invisible Taransky at a console manifesting her and answering reporters' questions in a voice that the computer transforms into Simone's. As for Taransky himself, his own story has to do, lamely, with his possible marital reunion, helped by the couple's teenage daughter, and the guarding of his computer secret from a tabloid editor's snooping.

Al Pacino plays Taransky. It is tempting to say that *Simone* is this month's Pacino picture, except that he never coasts. I've been watching Pacino on stage and screen since his earliest Off-Broadway days, and in his lesser roles (like this one) and his better ones, he treats each performance as the reason for which he was born. It's admirable. He almost makes Taransky believable in this strained plot. Catherine Keener, who plays his ex-wife and boss, is an oddity. Whenever she gets a cool, hip, controlled, and controlling role, she is firm and can be snakily funny. Whenever she attempts any kind of emotion, as in this picture, she becomes an amateur.

But the paramount fact about this film is that it exists. Computer-generated images already have a twenty-year history in feature films, dating from *Tron* in 1982. *Simone*, however, is the first picture I can remember in which the generating itself is central and in which deception by an image is the basic idea. Prophecies about the future of digitalized films are available by the dozen at your corner supermarket: take your pick, pro or con, abject or dismissive. I note only, and again, that technology itself is now threatening the first art that technology ever created.

The most striking moment in this picture is at the end. A year has elapsed. In an interview the smiling Taransky is seated on a sofa with his arm around Simone, who is holding a baby. Then we see—unavoidable word—the reality. He is seated on the sofa alone, his arm around empty space. Simone and the baby were later added by computer. The contrast between those two shots is essentially the whole film.

In Pacino's last picture, *Insomnia*, he co-starred with Robin Williams. Not to be outdone in productivity, Williams, too, appears in a new picture, **One Hour Photo** (Fox Searchlight), written and directed by Mark Romanek. Both the Williams performance in *Insomnia* and this new one can best be appreciated—a unique criterion, surely—by those who have seen the actor in his talk-show appearances.

Williams has created a double public being. On those talk shows he is manic—as he is expected to be, is brought there to be. He never sits fixedly in the guest's chair; he zooms around the stage, talks to whom he pleases as he pleases, keeps cascading verbal imitations and gags with miming to match, and in general behaves like a nutty genie just released from a bottle. In some of his films, that ecstatic yet cultivated irrepressibility sweeps in—still, he often plays serious characters. (Oliver Sacks, for heaven's sake!) In such a role his gravity is meant to be seen against the background of his mania.

In *One Hour Photo* he is Sy, a mild, utterly conventional, middle-aged manager of the film-developing station in a branch of a huge supermarket chain. His life is as drab as is humanly possible: job, smiles, dependable service, dull meals, and (lone) bed. Our first reaction is, as it is meant to be, to mark the difference between this man and the "real" Williams, the zany one who has been suppressed to permit Sy to exist. But there is a secret in Sy: he has a fantasy life. One of his customers is a young wife, usually accompanied by her small son. Secretly, in a non-sexual, utterly familial way, Sy feels close to her. He handles all the family snapshots that she brings in, which she does fairly frequently, and for Sy those snapshots become a link of intimacy with the young woman and her family. They lull him into the fantasy of being a member of the group.

The very last moment of the film is a fantasy snapshot of the whole family with Sy as one of them. But en route to that last shot, Sy encounters various problems brought on by his desire to join the family. This plotting takes Sy into situations that are inconsistent with the man who has been so carefully modeled for us, even if they are meant as inevitable extremities in his life.

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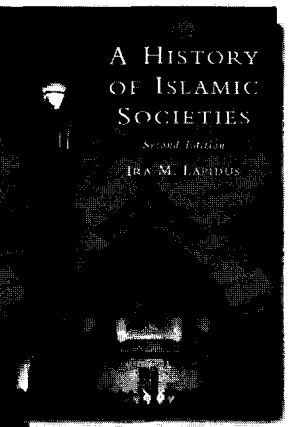

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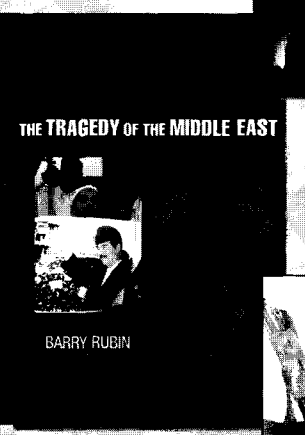

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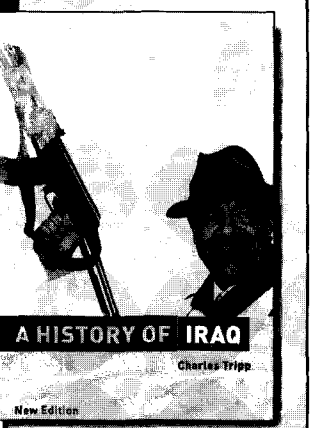

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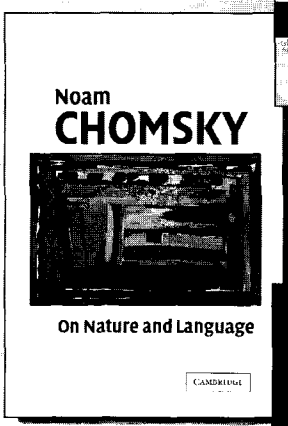

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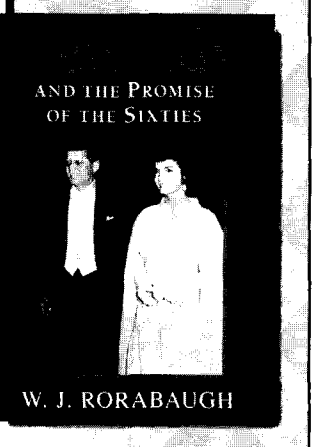

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Much of the time *One Hour Photo* reminded me of the German Expressionist drama that flowered in the early 1920s. For example, Georg Kaiser's *From Morn to Midnight* is about a bank clerk whose temperament is much like Sy's and whose hunger for some flavor in his life leads to catastrophe. But there is an important difference between Kaiser's play and Romanek's screenplay. Kaiser was using a form and a timbre to attack a society that fostered sterility. Romanek's Sy is not unhappy with his life: he apparently would be willing to continue permanently with his dailiness and his fantasy—if the plot had not interrupted it. In *One Hour Photo* the plot reduces the film to a performance and a problem—Williams's good work and the author's quandary about what to do with it.

Still, Romanek directed his picture with as consistent a vacant, echoing tone as his screenplay permitted. And Williams succeeds in his personal intent: he posits the nerd against the crazy comic who is waiting just off-camera. ■

Robert Brustein on Theater

A Boon for the Boonies

TO GET THERE from the east, you drive from Greenfield along Route 2, otherwise known as the Mohawk Trail, a well-traveled tourist region whose primary products are leather moccasins and maple syrup, and whose principal art would seem to be gigantic statues of Mohawk warriors. Negotiating the hairpin turns of the Berkshire Mountains after winding along the Deerfield River, you will finally descend into North Adams, an apparently depressed industrial town dotted with its fair share of Americana, such as the omnipresent McDonald's hamburger joint and Cumberland Farms convenience store, though a few new restaurants can also be found. Almost as grim and abandoned as nearby Fall River, North Adams would seem a most unlikely area to support the largest center for visual and performing arts in the United States.

Yet this small town is the site of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, otherwise known as **MASS MoCA**, one of the most fearless and adventurous cultural initiatives of the past decade. (It opened its doors to the public in 1999, following the stimulus of a huge grant from the state under Michael Dukakis.) MASS MoCA sounds like a drink you might order at Starbucks. But there are no such chains to be found on this campus of twenty-seven buildings perched on thirteen central acres of the town. The brick mill structures that house the museum were originally used to print textiles, then to produce electrical capacitors. Now they attract some extremely advanced art, not to mention hundreds of thousands of visitors who come throughout the year to enjoy, debate, and puzzle over it.

I traveled there last week to see a giant Robert Wilson installation called "14 Stations" and a Lee Breuer opera-in-progress called *Red Beads*. A museum that features such avant-garde wizards as Wilson and Breuer on the same campus obviously has a strong theatrical identity, and under Museum Director Joseph Thompson and Director for Performing Arts Jonathan Secor, MASS MoCA is letting the Berkshires know that there may be more to theater than commercially oriented middlebrow summer entertainment traveling from or to New York. What is even more encouraging is the fact that MASS MoCA receives most of its financial support not from government, private foundations, or wealthy patrons, but from the local populace and transient visitors. Their small donations constitute the major contributions to the museum.

Wilson's "14 Stations" was originally commissioned by the Oberammergau Festival, whose once famously anti-Semitic Passion Play, presented every ten years, has been a feature of the Easter holidays since 1634. It is based on the traditional *Via Crucis*, or Way of the Cross, which describes the journey of Jesus from trial and condemnation through crucifixion and resurrection. Wilson's idiosyncratic version of the Passion, reflecting his customary approach to opera or theatrical text, has nothing to say about the Jews, or, for that matter, about Christianity. In a program note, Wilson calls his work a "mental landscape"—"if you don't know anything about Christianity, it's OK, but if you know something about it, you'll see it in a different context." Actually, one would be hard put to find any trace of traditional Christian imagery or iconography in these *tableaux vivants*. Yet the exhibition is deeply spiritual, reverberating with the kind of reverence and mystery that can sometimes be felt in Wilson's finest work.

All fourteen stations juxtapose images, sounds, video, and lighting effects. And all but the first (twenty hanging lightbulbs above a gurgling aluminum well) and the last (a stiff plastic figure, representing the resurrected Jesus, hanging upside down within a triangular thatched hut over a blue bed) are lodged inside wooden geometric cabins. All of these cabins are numbered; all are painted in different colors; and all are based on the architecture of Shaker houses. One features a large boulder, pierced by a shiny pipe, revolving above two tiny naked (if sexless) human figures. Another shows a huge, expressionless Shaker woman, holding an ancient iron, as an internal explosion alternates with the sound of water filtering down a drain. Still another is a floor-installed video of a naked man, covered in chalk from head to toe, crawling over grass to the accompaniment of strange cackling and gurgling sounds resembling those of the Jupiterians watching Keir Dullea eat his meal in Kubrick's *2001*.

Six Shaker women wearing black dresses, white caps, and slight smiles sit in wooden chairs wielding long darning needles. Five red-painted wolves, with matching black tongues and nails, their white teeth menacingly bared, strain against a backdrop of the Rockies. Thirteen black-and-white gulls are suspended in flight over a floor composed of countless glass medical vials. Although none of these images can be explained or interpreted, they leave a peculiarly resonant impression on the porches of your mind, much in the manner of Cocteau's Surrealist movies. And they demonstrate why so many of Wilson's commissions now come from the Germans. They obviously appreciate his total commitment to Teutonic precision.

This commitment is further demonstrated in the other two Wilson exhibits featured at MASS MoCA: his sculptured chairs and theater drawings, and the video he drew from his play *Deafman Glance*. By

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Wilson standards, the latter work, which he created in 1981, is brevity itself, lasting only twenty-eight minutes, but it nevertheless displays the languorous stateliness and clockwork exactitude that are Wilson trademarks. The video follows the domestic odyssey of a black woman (Sheryl Sutton), wearing a black Victorian dress with puffed shoulders, as she oh-so-slowly washes dishes and pours milk, then ascends and descends two flights of stairs with the deliberateness of an anesthetized zombie, first to nourish her two little children, then to murder them with a huge carving knife that might have been lifted from the prop table of *Psycho*. The total lack of affect in these transactions curiously underlines the mysterious link in the lives of some families between nurture and aggression, love and hate. Wilson's final image shows us the woman looking out of the kitchen window in front of a naked incandescent lightbulb as we focus on the back of her head.

There were other installations on display the day that I visited MASS MoCA, including "Maya," a pyramid built out of 10,000 action figures, and an exhibit of the latest stuff from Austria (whose artists seem to be abnormally obsessed with fat pink people and fat pink cars). But the event that drew the largest audience was the Mabou Mines "Illuminated Text" called *Red Beads*. Lee Breuer has been working on this multidisciplinary piece for some time now, in collaboration with the puppet director/designer Basil Twist and the composer/musical director Ushio Torikai. Although the opera is still far from perfect (it included, for example, a yet-to-be-staged twenty-minute-long "Recitative" that lost a quarter of the audience), it is shaping up to be a major work.

Red Beads is based on a Siberian folktale that Breuer turned into a poem some years ago and included in his poetry, prose, and play collection *Sister Suzie's Cinema*. It concerns a girl turning thirteen who has been promised her ailing mother's beads as a birthday present. From the beginning those red beads are identified with drops of blood and a lurking mortality. First her dog dies, then her kitten. And on the day she turns thirteen and receives her present, her sickly pale mother strangles her with the beads and steals her identity. ("The child must first go to the grave. / You'll die and I'll become the child again, while you become love's slave.") At the end, the father reveals that the mother was a witch to whom he was in thrall. He takes the now pale girl by the hand to try to find the "lost" parent.

The fable pulses with ominous auguries, like Schubert's "Erlkönig," and

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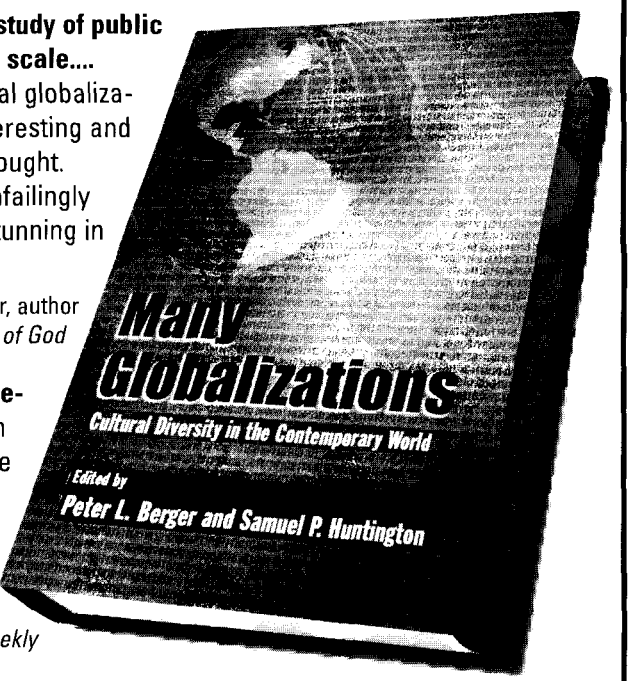

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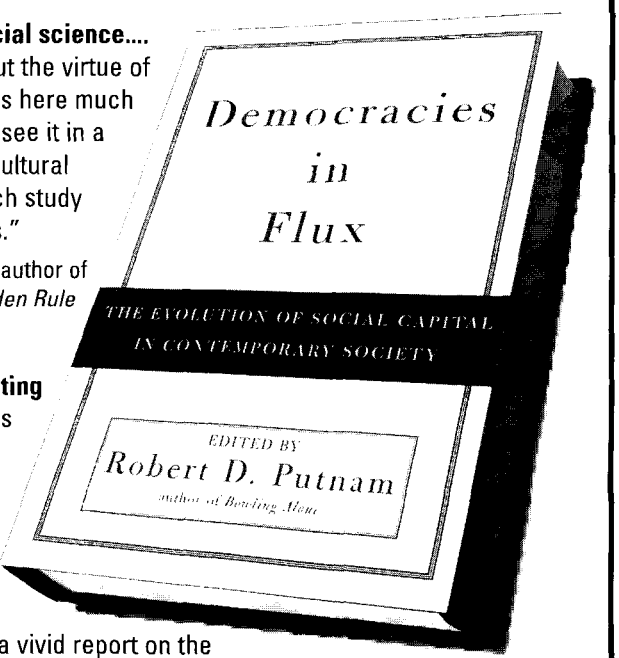

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familial reverberations, like the Grimms' "Juniper Tree": parent-child rivalries, coming-of-age fantasies induced by ripening sexuality, and incestuous longings. All of the themes are reinforced by the family nature of the casting. Clove Galilee, daughter of Breuer and Ruth Maleczech (who narrates and enacts the part of the mother), plays the young girl, and David Neumann, son of Mabou Mines veteran (and second narrator) Frederick Neumann, plays the father.

But the thing that gives the evening its special distinction is what the program calls "vertical choreography." Breuer and puppetmaster Twist have devised some truly stunning aerial calisthenics in which the father and the girl (with the help of the celebrated aerialist Foy) sail around the stage like demented wraiths, trailing fabric that has been artfully lighted by Andrew Hill. Indeed, the evening is full of *coups de théâtre*. A huge white cloth billows and shimmers like the ocean. The father walks up a vertical screen on which supertitles from the poem are projected, then disappears through a hole in the floor. Apparitions of flying muslin materialize above the stage. The child flies with her bed on her back, its sheets flowing behind her. The father removes his frock coat to reveal long ragged sleeves that trail to the stage. The father and the child merge into one in the air, becoming a floating white rag to the squeals of violins. Red paper lanterns descend from the flies as snow falls to the ground.

Still in the workshop phase, *Red Beads* is not yet completed. Torakai's dissonant music, though filled with theatrical effects, doesn't seem terribly distinguished as a score (hence the walkouts during the "Recitative"), and the aerial effects, while always stunning, can grow a little repetitive. But as a surreal dreamscape the piece is potentially as powerful as Wilson's "14 Stations."

MASS MoCA should be commended for importing the one and helping to develop the other. Both offerings demonstrate that the American theatrical avant-garde can boast some of the most innovative artists in the world, and in MASS MoCA the kind of institution that will foster and nourish them. That alone is ground for encouragement and enthusiasm, especially at a time when serious culture seems to have disappeared from the continent like that Delaware-size ice shelf that recently broke off from Antarctica and floated out to sea. ■

Rings of Smoke

By RUTH FRANKLIN

After Nature
by W. G. Sebald
translated by Michael Hamburger

(Random House, 116 pp., $21.95)

I.

IF THERE IS an underworld where the darkest nightmares of the twentieth century dwell, W.G. Sebald could be its Charon. Starting with *Vertigo*, which combines sketches of Kafka and Stendhal with a fictionalized record of travels in Italy and elsewhere, and ending with *Austerlitz*, the story of a boy sent to England via *Kindertransport* in 1939 and brought up under a false name, all of Sebald's books have been about bridging gaps, and about the impossibility of bridging gaps—between memory and forgetting, between art and reality, between the living and the dead. These extraordinary works are different on each reading, constantly in flux. Sebald's sudden death in a car accident last December was tragic for many reasons, but for his readers foremost because his books, all of them variations on a small group of themes, seemed parts of a whole that had not yet been brought to completion but had already broken new literary ground.

Like the origami figures that open and close with a twist of the fingers, Sebald's prose moves simultaneously inward and outward. The opening of *Austerlitz* is exemplary:

> In the second half of the 1960s I traveled repeatedly from England to Belgium, partly for study purposes, partly for other reasons which were never entirely clear to me, staying sometimes for just one or two days, sometimes for several weeks. On one of these Belgian excursions which, as it seemed to me, always took me further and further abroad, I came on a glorious early summer's day to the city of Antwerp, known to me previously only by name. Even on my arrival, as the train rolled slowly over the viaduct with its curious pointed turrets on both sides and into the dark station concourse, I had begun to feel unwell, and this sense of indisposition persisted for the whole of my visit to Belgium on that occasion. I still remember the uncertainty of my footsteps as I walked all round the inner city, down Jeruzalemstraat, Nachtegaalstraat, Pelikaanstraat, Paradijsstraat, Immerseelstraat, and many other streets and alleyways, until at last, plagued by a headache and my uneasy thoughts, I took refuge in the zoo by the Astridplein, next to the Centraal Station, waiting for the pain to subside. I sat there on a bench in dappled shade, beside an aviary full of brightly feathered finches and siskins fluttering about. As the afternoon drew to a close I walked through the park, and finally went to see the Nocturama, which had first been opened only a few months earlier. It was some time before my eyes became used to its artificial dusk and I could make out different animals leading their sombrous lives behind the glass by the light of a pale moon. I cannot now recall exactly what creatures I saw on that visit to the Antwerp Nocturama, but there were probably bats and jerboas from Egypt and the Gobi Desert, native European hedgehogs and owls, Australian opossums, pine martens, dormice, and lemurs, leaping from branch to branch, darting back and forth over the grayish-yellow sandy ground, or disappearing into a bamboo thicket. The only animal which has remained lingering in my memory is the raccoon. I watched it for a long time as it sat beside a little stream with a serious expression on its face, washing the same piece of apple over and over again, as if it hoped that all this washing, which went far beyond any reasonable thoroughness, would help it to escape the unreal world in which it had arrived, so to speak, through no fault of its own.

The single-mindedness with which this passage proceeds is Sebald's signature. Each sentence, bizarre or mundane, contributes another piece to the overall struc-

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ture until that structure seems unable to sustain any more weight. The straightforward remark that opens the book, about the trips to and from Belgium, is immediately complicated. What are these reasons that were never clear to the speaker? How can these "excursions," all within the country, take him "further and further abroad"? The next sentences deepen the mystery: the narrator's sudden illness, the fantastic street names—Jerusalem, Nightingale, Pelican, Paradise, and, most evocatively, Eternal Soul—and finally the Nocturama itself, a symbol so potent that, like all of Sebald's symbols, it stops just this side of parody. And here, too, we get a final shrug of contradiction: Sebald claims to have difficulty remembering which animals he saw in the Nocturama, but at the same time he offers an almost comically specific series of examples. The tug-of-war between what is and what cannot be never stops.

THE WORLD OF Sebald's books is its own Nocturama, inhabited by creatures at home in the dark. Like the raccoon that he describes so plaintively, Sebald's characters emerge with sudden clarity from the haze of their surroundings, obsessively repeating whatever action they have chosen, though it will not bring them the escape for which they so desperately yearn. They are destroyed souls, fractured under the burden of the pain that they bear. There is the tortured Kafka in *Vertigo*, sick and disoriented while traveling in Austria and Italy, tormented by dreams "in which everything was forever splitting and multiplying, over and again, in the most terrifying manner." There is the painter Max Ferber in *The Emigrants*, a Jew sent to England as a child during the war, whose parents died in Dachau: "that tragedy in my youth struck such deep roots within me that it later shot up again, put forth evil flowers, and spread the poisonous canopy over me which has kept me so much in the shade and dark in recent years." There is the Ashbury family in *The Rings of Saturn*, who embroider cloth all day and undo their work each night, and feel that "we never got used to being on this earth and life is just one great, ongoing incomprehensible blunder." And there is Jacques Austerlitz, whose life journey is driven by a blind and unsatisfiable longing to recapture the childhood memories he has entirely, unwillingly suppressed.

The strangest thing about Sebald's incomparably strange work is that upon first reading it gives us no reason to think that it is fiction. Though *Austerlitz* was largely taken as a novel, Sebald himself refused to designate it as such; in an interview he called it "a prose book of indefinite form." Indeed, why must the passage above be anything other than notes from an idiosyncratic travel journal? The street names, improbable though they may be, are easily verified with a map of Antwerp, and the zoo, located near the central train station just as he says, does in fact have a Nocturama. But though the books are marked by an extraordinary profusion of facts—snippets from Kafka's letters, notes on the mating practices of herrings, even reproductions of train tickets and restaurant receipts that appear to document the narrator's journeys—fiction pulls at them with the force of gravity. The four stories that constitute *The Emigrants* are connected by a single image that flits through each of them: the figure of Nabokov with his butterfly net, sometimes a grown man, sometimes a boy. And the four sketches of *Vertigo* each contain a line from a story by Kafka, slightly rephrased on each repetition, describing a corpse lying beneath a cloth on a bier. The improbability of all four characters in *The Emigrants* crossing paths with Nabokov, and the impossibility of a manifestation of Kafka's image appearing in all four parts of *Vertigo*, is but one signal of the turn into fiction. As one reads more deeply into Sebald's work, its fictionality becomes utterly essential.

BUT WHILE FICTION tugs at one sleeve, reality tugs at the other with nearly equal force, most dramatically in the black-and-white photographs that Sebald has strewn about all his prose books. The photographs have neither captions nor credits to give a clue to their provenance; the text describes the taking of some of them, while others seem to be more generally illustrative, and still others entirely random. In the last chapter of *Vertigo*, for instance, the narrator, visiting his hometown after many years of absence, mentions a photo album that his father gave his mother as a Christmas present during the first year of the war. "In it are pictures of the Polish campaign, all neatly captioned in white ink. Some of these photographs show gypsies who had been rounded up and put into detention. They are looking out, smiling, from behind the barbed wire, somewhere in a far corner of Slovakia where my father and his vehicle repairs unit had been stationed for several weeks before the outbreak of war." We are then shown a photograph of a woman carrying a baby in a bundle, dressed in gypsy-like clothes, behind a wire fence, with the caption "*Zigeuner*" (the German word for gypsy) in white ink. But for every photograph such as this one, there is another

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...His evolutionary map of warfare's impact on the state foreshadows the kind of events still unfolding."

WILLIAM SHAWCROSS calls it:

"Majestic... It is also argumentative, opinionated, brilliant"

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"A triumph...

Grand in scale and original in concept, amazingly learned, often provocative, consistently absorbing."

MICHAEL BESCHLOSS calls it:

"A masterly work"

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that firmly denies any easy correspondence with the text. Several pages earlier Sebald mentions an iron memorial cross that stands in the town graveyard to commemorate four young soldiers who died in a "last skirmish" in April 1945, and he lists their names. When we turn the page there is the cross; but it looks as if there are five names on it, not four, and the photograph is too blurry to make out any names.

The conflict between fact and fiction reaches its epitome in the voice that narrates all these stories of loss. Sebald seems to encourage us to think of this persona as something like his own. His narrator (the books share a single voice) occasionally offers biographical details that are identical with Sebald's own life: he is married, he lives in East Anglia, he was born toward the end of World War II in an Alpine German town, and came to England in the 1960s. Yet these details, like the photographs, obscure as much as they reveal. There are moments of startling intimacy, but even as Sebald's narrator seems to bare his soul, he tells us nothing about himself. And he favors a particularly disorienting narrative device: most of Sebald's characters tell their stories through direct encounters with the narrator, in monologues. At a crucial moment in some of the monologues, Sebald will switch from third person to first person, so that the narrator vanishes, leaving the character behind. Since he does not use quotation marks, the shift is seamless. This is not an "unreliable narrator," it is an unreliable narrative.

But even as Sebald builds layer upon layer of disguise, his books stumble over their own sentences in their desire to explain themselves to the reader, as the crushing pile of symbols in the opening to *Austerlitz* illustrates. The books search for patterns in nature and in human life, and as they do so they obsessively repeat themselves. To take one instance: *The Rings of Saturn* begins with a quotation from an encyclopedia that describes the planet's rings as "consist[ing] of ice crystals and probably meteorite particles describing circular orbits around the planet's equator. In all likelihood these are fragments of a former moon that was too close to the planet and was destroyed by its tidal effect." The circular motif is repeated throughout the book, in everything from the déjà vu the narrator experiences visiting a friend's apartment to an extraordinary vision that is one of Sebald's most beautiful and mystical moments: "At earlier times, in the summer evenings during my childhood when I had watched from the valley as swallows circled in the last light ... I would imagine that the world was held together by the courses they flew through the air." The momentum created by the piling of image upon image, of figure upon figure, is so powerful that when one reaches the end of the book—I have experienced this with all of Sebald's books, and others have mentioned it as well—one feels an irresistible compulsion to turn it over and begin again.

Yet there is something unsettling about the spell that Sebald's books weave; and it is not only the disequilibrium that is constantly evoked by the differences between fact and fiction, art and life—a state in which Sebald's narrator continually finds himself, and that Sebald seeks to induce in the reader as well. It is a deeper paradox. In the first chapter of *Vertigo*, Sebald traces the adventures of the young Stendhal (then known as Marie Henri Beyle) in Napoleon's army, and comments on the writer's own difficulty in recollecting them: "at times his view of the past consists of nothing but grey patches, then at others images appear of such extraordinary clarity he feels he can scarce credit them." He finds also that "even when the images supplied by memory are true to life, one can place little confidence in them"—years later Beyle will discover that he had replaced his own mental image of Ivrea with that of an engraving of the town. "This being so," Sebald concludes, "Beyle's advice is not to purchase engravings of fine views and prospects seen on one's travels, since before very long they will displace our memories completely, indeed one might say they destroy them."

W. G. Sebald by Jack Coughlin for The New Republic

Art is the preserver of memory, but it is also the destroyer of memory: this is the final tug-of-war in Sebald's work, and the most fundamental one. As he searches for patterns in the constellation of grief that his books record, he runs the risk that the patterns themselves, by virtue of their very beauty, will extinguish the grief that they seek to contain. Sebald's peculiar alchemy of aesthetics and sorrow unwittingly underscores its own insubstantiality. Even as he investigates the roots of memory, Sebald, like the weavers whom he finds so emblematic, continually unravels his own creations.

II.

For English readers, Sebald's books have an extra layer of circularity, because they have appeared in translation out of order. *Vertigo*, his first prose book, was published in the United States after *The Emigrants* and *The Rings of Saturn*; and *Austerlitz* followed last year. Now Sebald's first literary work to be published in German, *After Nature*, is his last to appear in English. (He also published two books of essays on Austrian literature and a collection of lectures on

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the subject of the Allied bombing campaign in postwar German literature, none of which has yet been translated.) This displacement is actually a boon to English readers, because *After Nature* benefits immensely from being read after Sebald's other work. It is a panorama of many of his great themes, but they appear in embryonic form.

Like Sebald's other books, *After Nature* confounds genre: it has been called a prose poem, but while the language in places has the feel of prose, technically it is free verse. Each of the three sections has its own title and can be read as a distinct poem, but Sebald seems to have thought of them as a single entity. (In German the book is subtitled *Ein Elementargedicht*, "an elemental poem.") The volume's title refers to the practice of creating a work of art from a living subject (the poem mentions painting "after nature"), and the subject who is patiently submitting is Sebald himself: each of the three characters presented is a self-portrait of the writer. The first section is a biographical meditation on Mathias Grünewald, the sixteenth-century painter known for altarpieces that depict the crucifixion and other torments of the flesh and the soul with harrowing fidelity. (Max Ferber, the painter of *The Emigrants*, seems to speak for Sebald when he says that "the extreme vision of that strange man, which was lodged in every detail, distorted every limb, and infected the colours like an illness, was one I had always felt in tune with.") The second section follows eighteenth-century explorer Georg Wilhelm Steller (who shares Sebald's initials) on an Arctic journey led by Vitus Bering. And in the third Sebald investigates his own family history and early memories, much of which will prove fertile ground for later works as well.

The suggestion of self-portraiture is evident from the opening lines of *After Nature*, which depict a person closing one of Grünewald's altar panels. As the panel folds in upon itself, the face of St. George becomes visible on the outside, "about to step over the frame's/threshold." George's "silver/feminine features" are those of Grünewald himself, whose face "emerges again and again/in his work." We are reminded of Sebald's own face and voice appearing over and over in his characters; and it heightens the analogy that the shape of the closed altar panel is reminiscent of a book, with the face of St. George—that is, of Grünewald—in the spot where the author's name should be.

Grünewald's face, Sebald continues, displays "always the same/gentleness, the same burden of grief,/the same irregularity of the eyes, veiled/and sliding sideways down into loneliness." Holbein the Younger, too, has depicted him in a painting of a female saint:

> These were strangely disguised
> instances of resemblance, wrote Fraenger
> whose books were burned by the fascists.
> Indeed it seemed as though in such
> works of art
> men had revered each other like
> brothers, and
> often made monuments in each other's
> image where their paths had crossed.

One could hardly ask for a better description of Sebald's own enterprise. Starting with this book, he would practice a somber cartography, mapping out in his own works of art the crossing paths, real or imagined, of Stendhal, Kafka, Nabokov, and the countless others whose suffering is stenciled on his work: "the marks of pain," as he put it in *Austerlitz*, "which ... trace countless fine lines through history."

As the glancing reference above to "the fascists" shows, even when the events of World War II are not front and center in Sebald's books, they never recede far into the background. "We know there is a long tradition/of persecuting the Jews," the poem declares a bit later in this section, and goes on to describe the torments suffered by the Jews of Frankfurt in the Middle Ages: a fiery massacre, the wearing of yellow rings, their confinement to a ghetto in which they were locked each night, and "on Sundays at four in the/afternoon." Grünewald would have witnessed this persecution, Sebald continues, because his future wife was reared in the ghetto, though she later converted to Christianity. But the persecution of the Jews is just a tile in the mosaic of human suffering, a mosaic that in this poem includes Grünewald's personal torments—his marriage was unhappy, possibly because "he had an eye for men"—as well as those of the patients in the hospital at Isenheim, the site of Grünewald's masterpiece, whose horrible disfigurements may have inspired some of the artist's work; and the massacre of five thousand peasants in the battle of Frankenhausen in 1525, which Grünewald learns of after meeting two painters who are brothers, Barthel and (yes) Sebald Beham. In Sebald's account, Grünewald refused to leave his house after hearing of this, but

> he could hear the gouging out
> of eyes that long continued
> between Lake Constance and

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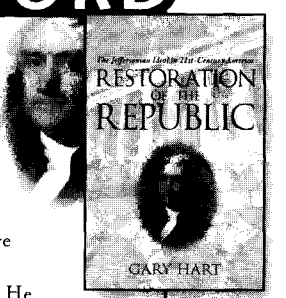

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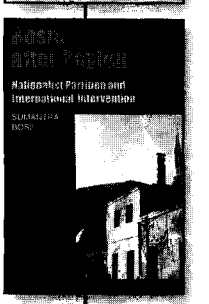

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the Thuringian forest.
For weeks at that time he wore
a dark bandage over his face.

But the dominant event is the solar eclipse of 1502, a "catastrophic incursion of darkness":

On the first of October the moon's
shadow
slid over Eastern Europe from
Mecklenburg
over Bohemia and the Lausitz to
southern Poland,
and Grünewald, who repeatedly was
in touch
with the Aschaffenburg Court Astrologer
Johann Indagine,
will have travelled to see this event of
the century,
awaited with great terror, the eclipse
of the sun,
so will have become a witness to
the secret sickening away of the world,
in which a phantasmal encroachment
of dusk
in the midst of daytime like a fainting fit
poured through the vault of the sky,
while over the banks of mist and the cold
heavy blues of the clouds
a fiery red arose, and colours
such as his eyes had not known
radiantly wandered about, never again
to be
driven out of the painter's memory.
These colours unfold as the reverse of
the spectrum in a different consistency
of the air, whose deoxygenated void
in the gasping breath of the figures
on the central Isenheim panel is enough
to portend our death by asphyxiation;
after which
comes the mountain landscape of
weeping
in which Grünewald with a pathetic gaze
into the future has prefigured
a planet utterly strange, chalk-coloured
behind the blackish-blue river.

Despite what the medievals may have thought, it is impossible now to see an eclipse as "catastrophic": the event simply does not merit the implication of horror. Sebald understands the eclipse, however, not as a single dreadful incident, but as part of a plumb line that descends through history, linking all the horrors that would take place in the same physical location, up to and including the Holocaust.

Later in the poem, similarly, Sebald discusses Altdorfer's painting of Lot and his daughters fleeing Sodom, in reference to the sight of Nuremberg in flames under the Allied bombs; and the epigraph to this section, from Virgil's *Eclogues*, draws the reader back even further: "and now far-off smoke pearls from homestead rooftops/and from high mountains the greater shadows fall." Though the conflagrations are distant from one another in every way—temporally, geographically—they are aesthetically part of a greater universal pattern of fiery massacre, a pattern that circles around infinitely, changed slightly upon each recurrence but not fundamentally altered. In later works Sebald has accomplished this kind of pattern-tracing more effectively—here the layers can feel a bit slapped together—but the fundamental idea is the same: that when great suffering takes place somewhere, generation after generation, the sorrows are trodden into the soil.

But there is a crucial difference between the self-portrait and the artist: by witnessing one of the horrors that took place in this locale (the eclipse), Grünewald becomes a witness to them all. Sebald, on the other hand, witnessed none of World War II; and he feels this gap in his experience as painfully as most people feel the experience of trauma. "I grew up,/despite the dreadful course/of events elsewhere, on the northern/edge of the Alps, so it seems/to me now, without any/idea of destruction," he writes in the poem's final, autobiographical section. Born in the penultimate year of the war in a remote German village, he was shielded from the destruction by virtue of his youth; but still as a child he imagined within him "a silent catastrophe that occurs almost unperceived/ ... this/I have never got over."

Like Jacques Austerlitz and Max Ferber, Sebald sees himself as a child brought up unaware of his own identity, a Kaspar Hauser–like figure. The poem never fully reveals the source of the "silent catastrophe," the absent memory, but each part of this last autobiographical section sifts through a different time period in Sebald's life in search of clues. "For it is hard to discover/the winged vertebrates of prehistory/embedded in tablets of slate," the section begins, as if continuing a conversation, which in a way it is.

But if I see before me
the nervature of past life
in one image, I always think
that this has something to do
with truth.

"How far, in any case, must one go back/to find the beginning?" Sebald asks. And the "beginning" for which he searches is that of his own prehistory. After passing over the day his grandparents were married and a few other potential "beginnings," he settles on the day before his father left to serve in Dresden, "of whose beauty his memory, as he/remarks when I question him,/retains no trace." The next night Nuremberg was attacked, and his mother, on her way back to the Allgäu, was stuck at a friend's house in the town of Windsheim, where she discovered that she was pregnant. The narrator's life, then, is indelibly intertwined with the last days of the war. And yet he can retain no memory of it; he was too young.

"I nearly went out of my mind," Sebald says of his reaction to seeing Altdorfer's painting in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Austerlitz will use exactly the same words to describe revisiting sites in Prague that he had not seen since childhood. Mourning the loss of a memory that he never had, Sebald turns to Altdorfer as a surrogate. When memory is lacking, art will suffice; but art is a shorthand, not a substitute. Sebald aestheticizes history, but he never mistakes history for art.

III.

After Nature, the first of Sebald's literary works, inaugurates the search for "the nervature of past life" that would form the subtext of all his books. The character obsessively driven by a quest for knowledge—a quest rooted in his or her personal life—is a constantly recurring figure. Janine, a French professor in *The Rings of Saturn*, studies Flaubert's novels with "an intense personal interest" that is never explained. Jacques Austerlitz, a retired art history professor, has spent much of his life working on an investigation into the "family likeness" between various monuments of Europe, a topic that he feels compelled to pursue by an "impulse which he himself ... did not really understand." Sebald's narrator can also be included in this category: though we encounter him at various points along his wanderings through Europe and America, we are never told why he makes his journeys.

But Sebald did write a book in which he explained what it was that possessed him so; and in doing so he ignited a controversy in Germany that one critic compared to the storm about Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. Invited in 1997 to give a series of lectures at the University of Zurich, Sebald boldly put forth the thesis that postwar German literature had failed adequately to represent the devastating effects of the Allied bombing campaign for the German nation. The lectures were extensively covered in the Swiss and German media, and Sebald published them in book form

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in 1999 under the title *Luftkrieg und Literatur*.

The scale of the destruction caused by the bombings, Sebald argues, is difficult "to even halfway comprehend," but they "appear to have left hardly a trace of pain in the collective consciousness." Not only did few German novelists concern themselves with the air war against Germany, Sebald says, but there exist almost no testimonies of the war written by Germans; the majority of the information about the destruction comes from foreign journalists reporting from the bombed-out nation. *Trummerliteratur*, the "rubble literature" movement that emerged in the years immediately following World War II, is most notable for what Sebald calls its "collective amnesia." Even now that historians have begun to document the destruction of the German cities, "the images of this harrowing chapter of our history have not truly crossed the threshold of the national consciousness." Sebald describes a "tacit but universally valid agreement" among writers not to record the "true state of material and moral annihilation" in which the nation found itself—in other words, a conspiracy in German culture, the effects of which have lasted to this day.

WHAT IS NEEDED to counteract this tendency, Sebald argues, is a "natural history of the destruction." (Random House has borrowed this phrase for the title of the English version of the book, which will appear next year.) He is generous with statistics: 1 million tons of bombs dropped, 131 cities hit, 600,000 civilians dead, 3.5 million homes destroyed, 7.5 million Germans left homeless. He cites Hans Erich Nossack on the streams of refugees that "noiselessly and incessantly flooded everything," bringing the chaos of the urban bombing into the quiet villages of the countryside. He devotes pages to the sudden flourishing of the parasites that feed off corpses: the rats, "bold and fat," that "cavorted in the streets"; the flies, "huge, iridescent green, as had never been seen before." And he remarks mordantly that "the striking paucity of observations and commentary on this matter can be explained by an unspoken taboo that is more understandable when one considers that the Germans, who had taken upon themselves the cleansing and hygienization of all of Europe, must have had to shield themselves from the mounting fear that they themselves were in fact the 'rat nation' [*Rattenvolk*]."

Though he is generally sympathetic to the German civilians who suffered so greatly, Sebald has harsh words for the way they closed their eyes to the destruction around them. Alfred Döblin remarked that people "walk around as if nothing had happened and ... the city had always looked like this." The Swedish journalist Stig Dagerman, reporting from Hamburg, recalled traveling on a train that passed through the "moonscape" of that city; though the train was full, not a single person looked out the window. "And *because* he looked out the window," Sebald writes, "people recognized him as a foreigner." Nossack reported seeing a woman cleaning the windows of a house that "stands alone, undamaged, in the middle of the wasteland of ruins." Sebald finds something ghastly in this: we are unsurprised when the inhabitants of an insect colony do not weep over the destruction of a construction nearby, but "from humankind one expects a certain amount of empathy."

This is really beside the point, though, because the question concerns the responsibility of writers to respond to incidents in their culture, not the responsibility of the average citizen to open his eyes when confronted with the uglinesses of humanity. (The German "amnesia" about the Allied bombing would hardly have been the Germans' first cognitive failure in those terrible years.) Sebald is correct about the profound absence of the bombing campaign in postwar German literature, but it is not as if German writers had chosen to ignore the war. They overwhelmingly concerned themselves with the war—I am thinking of Grass, Böll, Koeppen, Mann, Bachmann, Frisch, Lenz, Hofmann—but not with the *Luftkrieg* aspect of it. Indeed, in postwar German writing one finds almost an obsession with Nazism: its beginnings, its rise to power, its lingerings in German society long after the war, and not least its crimes. Based on the literary evidence, National Socialism may have been as earth-shaking for German society as the million tons of bombs that fell on German soil. If German writers did not begin to write about the destruction of their cities until the 1990s, this may be because it was simply not as important to them; and that is to their credit, a sign of historical conscience. It is hardly a moral delinquence to worry more about what you have done to others than about what others have done to you.

One could also ask, as many German critics did, whether it actually is the responsibility of literature to register the impact of contemporary events. And there were other criticisms of Sebald's argument as well. Kurt Oesterle, writing in the *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, pointed out that Sebald may have overestimated the eyewitness reports that make up so much of the basis for his arguments, reports that "shock before they explain." And Dieter Forte published a long and very personal article in *Der Spiegel* in which he argued that "there exists horror that is beyond language," and cited the Polish writer Andrzej Szczypiorski's comment that after he was released from a concentration camp he needed to "switch off his head" so that his body would survive. "Sebald prefers the indirect method, the clear reports, the clarity of calm observation; he remains distant from the actual horror, as if he were on the trail of one of his collages," Forte wrote. "He overlooks my generation, the generation of the children in the big cities, who can remember, when they are able, when they can find the words for it—and for that one must wait an entire lifetime."

BUT THESE CRITICISMS all overlook the aspect of Sebald's book that, for a non-German reader, is the most obvious, and the most shocking: the utterly ahistorical way in which Sebald discusses the bombing campaign, without giving even a hint of moral or political context. One could argue that everyone knows the context already and so it does not need to be reiterated. But in fact Sebald was misinterpreted by some as implicitly arguing that the sufferings of the Germans could be seen as compensatory for the crimes of the Nazis, as the letters from readers that he discusses in the third chapter of the book reveal. He tries to correct this, quoting from such letters and giving his responses, and ending with the comment that "the majority of Germans today know—at least so one hopes—that we directly provoked the destruction of the cities in which we lived." But in the first two chapters of his book—that is, the portion delivered as lectures—Sebald mentions the Holocaust only obliquely, and no other form of German aggression during World War II at all.

I do not mean in any way to suggest that Sebald was insensitive to the victims of the Holocaust. His literary work, especially *The Emigrants* and *Austerlitz*, shows him to be unique among German writers in his understanding of the catastrophe that befell the European Jews. Indeed, only a writer with Sebald's moral standing with regard to the Holocaust could have dared write a book such as this one. And yet parts of *Luftkrieg und Literatur* are weirdly lacking in this sensitivity. One hesitates to accuse Sebald of something so crass as "moral equivalency," but the suspicion of such a confusion

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cannot be avoided. On the very first page of the book Sebald calls the Allied bombings of Germany during the war "an act of extermination [*Vernichtungsaktion*] unique in history up to that point." Later he refers to the "incineration" [*Einäscherung*] of the city of Hamburg. He knows as well as anyone what those words imply.

In Sebald's defense, one could argue that the Holocaust is simply not his subject here, that he is writing about an entirely different aspect of the war, and that to do justice to the Holocaust as well would have required an entirely different book. But the book makes it hard to sustain such a defense. For *Luftkrieg und Literatur* goes even further. Most remarkable is the passage in which Sebald discusses the important role of music in Germany, even at the time of the bombings. He quotes an English journalist who said that "in the midst of such shambles only the Germans could produce a magnificent full orchestra and a crowded house of music lovers," and he rightly takes umbrage with this "double-edged" remark. And then he continues:

> Who would deny the audiences, who were listening then with glistening eyes to the music rising throughout the nation once again, the right to be moved by feelings of gratitude for their rescue? And the question must also be permitted as to whether their breasts did not swell with the perverse pride that no one in the history of mankind on earth had been so played upon and had withstood so much as the Germans.

"The history of mankind on earth"? This grandiose and categorical suggestion would be incredible even if it came from a mediocre German writer eager to come to terms with the past (say, Bernhard Schlink); but it is even more incredible coming from Sebald.

And yet in a way it is not so incredible. For Sebald's work has always presented suffering without its cause, as merely a part of the great pattern of pain that defines the human condition. We see this in the unique brand of melancholy that afflicts his characters, a melancholy that always seems to exist outside their comprehension. ("What was it that so darkened our world?" laments one character in *Austerlitz* on her deathbed.) Sebald's narrator, too, often makes remarks that summon the very depths of grief and then asserts that he "has no idea" why a particular image or anecdote affects him so. For all the empathy that Sebald seems to feel for the people in his books, this willful lack of understanding, this pretense to historical ignorance, is evidence of the "distance from actual horror" that Forte detects in his work. In order to trace the pattern of human suffering, one must have a certain disengagement from it—but at such a height things can begin to blur. And so Jews, Germans, and countless others are all equal elements of the design, equal parts of the mosaic.

Sebald's patterning amounts to an aestheticizing of catastrophe, and thus it annihilates causality. We appreciate the beauty of the image that the writer discerns, but it adds nothing to our understanding of why things happened as they did. And this is the great problem with a "natural history" of the bombings. The air war over Hitler's Germany was not a natural disaster, like the eclipse of 1502. It was not random in its causes or its effects; and so, morally speaking, it was worse than a natural disaster. The bombings may have had the physical impact of an earthquake, but they cannot be understood in the same way, because to do so is to ignore the fact that this catastrophe was man-made, a human action, and thus more complicated and more terrible than another inevitable repetition of nature's rich but meaningless pattern of disaster. We must grieve for the terrible loss of innocent life that occurred in every arena in which World War II was fought, but we must also recognize that Hitler's aggression needed to be stopped.

In light of Sebald's views regarding art and memory, his arguments about the absence of German literature on the *Luftkrieg* read a bit ironically. For this time the impairment is not a gap in memory, it is a gap in literature. But as we have seen, Sebald looks to art to fill gaps in memory, and the air war is his own biggest gap.

> I grew up with the feeling that something had been withheld from me—at home, in school, and also by the German writers whose books I read in the hope of being able to find out more about the enormity in the background of my own life. I spent my childhood and youth in a region on the northern edge of the Alps that was largely protected from the immediate effects of the so-called hostilities. At the end of the war I was just one year old and thus can hardly have retained impressions based on real experiences from that time of destruction. But even today, when I see photographs or documentaries of the war, I feel as if I stemmed from it, so to speak, and as if a shadow of these horrors, which I did not experience at all, had been cast over me from which I would never escape.

I sympathize deeply with Sebald's desire to resurrect a memory never experienced. I have a similar desire to "remember" the Holocaust, which casts a shadow (to borrow his phrase) over my own life and that of my family. But gaps in memory are experience that is forever lost; and art cannot take its place. At the end of *The Emigrants*, the narrator visits an exhibition of photographs from the Lodz ghetto, and among them he sees a photograph of three women around the age of twenty behind a loom.

> The light falls on them from the window in the background, so I cannot make out their eyes clearly, but I sense that all three of them are looking across at me, since I am standing on the very spot where Genewein the accountant stood with his camera. The young woman in the middle is blonde and has the air of a bride about her.... I wonder what the three women's names were—Roza, Luisa and Lea, or Nona, Decuma and Morta, the daughters of night, with spindle, scissors and thread.

I am strangely moved by this passage each time I read it, because the young woman in the photograph could have been my own grandmother, who was blonde and whose family owned a textile factory in Lodz. I imagine her behind the loom, spinning out my own fate: to pace the same ground over and over, looking for the source of the shadow that still darkens my world. Yet such a connection is dangerous, because it illustrates the illusory workings of art against memory. My grandmother is not a quasi-mythological figure peering out from behind a loom; she is a real person whose experiences during the Holocaust cannot be subsumed in the cycle of life's sorrows. I do not know what she looked like as a young woman, but my imagining her behind Sebald's loom, like Sebald's invocation of Altdorfer or Virgil to describe Nuremberg, merely substitutes an artistic image for a blank space. The blankness, however, is closer to the truth.

When it seeks to do the work of memory, art may be a source of illusion. And Sebald may have had his own doubts about his endeavor. As he wrote in *The Rings of Saturn*:

> That weavers in particular, together with scholars and writers with whom they had much in common, tended to suffer from melancholy and all the evils associated

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> with it, is understandable given the nature of their work, which forced them to sit bent over, day after day, straining to keep their eye on the complex patterns they created. It is difficult to imagine the depths of despair into which those can be driven who, even after the end of the working day, are engrossed in their intricate designs and who are pursued, into their dreams, by the feeling that they have got hold of the wrong thread.

I do not know whether Sebald despaired over his own complex patterns; but he recognized himself that the patterning and layering in his books closely resembles the Penelope-like embroidering and unraveling of the weavers who re-appear throughout his pages. His material is memory, not thread, but the result is the same: a work of art that vanishes almost as soon as it appears, undone by the opposing forces that it seeks to mesh. And so Sebald's struggle against oblivion ends ironically in evanescence. The art that he created is of near-miraculous beauty, but it is as fragile, and as ephemeral, as a pearl of smoke. ■

The Disappeared

By CARYL PHILLIPS

Across the Sabbath River: In Search of a Lost Tribe of Israel by Hillel Halkin

(Houghton Mifflin, 394 pp., $28)

I REMEMBER FINDING shelter some years ago beneath the flimsy tarpaulin of a tent on the outskirts of the town of Dimona in the Negev desert. My host was an African American from Washington, D.C. who, twenty years earlier, had uprooted himself from his New World "exile" and "returned" to Israel, the land that he imagined to be his historical place of origin. He had left behind a relatively comfortable life on the lower slopes of congressional politics and re-made himself as a new man, which involved changing his name and his garb. My host, together with the like-minded members of his exiled community, was clearly striving to make an economic and cultural contribution to the life of Israel, although the Israeli government was at best ambivalent and at worst hostile toward these "returnees," who, despite their protestations of "belonging," were not strictly classifiable as Jews.

My host gestured to the dusty, uninspiring landscape all around us and remarked on its beauty. To my eyes there was nothing attractive about the dust bowl in which we were marooned, and to undergo much hardship in order to migrate to such a place struck me as somewhat remarkable. But my host loved this place. As far as he was concerned, the land could have been jungle, prairie, or mountaintop: its actual topography mattered little, for its beauty was more emblematic than it was physical. A "return" to this land had given him the opportunity to close a historical circle and make himself whole. Viewed through a diasporal lens, the land was not only beautiful, it was also "home."

Hillel Halkin, an accomplished essayist on literary, cultural, and political issues, and an admired translator of Hebrew and Yiddish literature, is familiar with the multiple ironies and difficulties that surround a search for home. Born in New York City in 1939, Halkin migrated to Israel three decades later as a committed Zionist. He subsequently served in the Israeli army reserve, raised a family, and produced a distinguished body of work, the vast majority of which speaks to a deep personal and professional allegiance to his new country. Halkin's adult passage from the Upper West Side of Manhattan to Israel has greatly affected all his subsequent writing. Sometimes it is the echo of Halkin's own migratory feet that stirs him to write, as in *Letters to an American Jewish Friend: A Zionist's Polemic* (1977), a series of six carefully crafted letters that attempt to give form and substance to Halkin's Zionist beliefs. More recently we find Halkin listening across a thousand years of history as Shmuel Hanagid, an eleventh-century Sephardic poet and Renaissance man, arrives in Granada. Halkin's translations of the poet's verse autobiography, in *Grand Things to Write a Poem On: A Verse Autobiography of Shmuel Hanagid*, have both fluency and passion. Yet it is Halkin's desire to grapple with the complex issues of belonging and membership that extend his political and literary meditations beyond straightforward questions of migration into the deeper mysteries of identity.

HALKIN'S REMARKABLE NEW book finds him journeying out in search of the truth behind the mystery of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, who were driven out of their homeland by Assyrian conquerors and have never been heard from since. The fate of this deported and apparently vanished Jewish population has long fascinated both Jews and Christians. Countless theories—some claiming to be scientific, others admittedly speculative, the vast majority of them highly implausible—have been put forward to account for the approximately twenty-seven thousand people who "disappeared." On the face of it, the loss of such a small number of individuals might be considered to be of little consequence, certainly by the cruel standard of modern wars and displacements; but the subsequent diasporal wandering of the Jewish people, and the fact that the "loss" is included in biblical lore, has lent an almost feverish passion to the wish to understand what became of these original victims of exile.

Halkin is the latest in a long line of those who have sought to solve this mystery, and so we will better understand his quest if we know something about the Lost Tribes hunters who preceded him. In the eighth century B.C.E., the Assyrians overran and conquered both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah in biblical Palestine. In the wake of their conquest the Assyrians deported many tribes of Israelites to different regions of Assyria, but the Bible says nothing about where they went or what happened to them. Yet their eventual return was repeatedly predicted by the Hebrew prophets as being symbolic of God's eventual reconciliation with his chosen people. Jeremiah vividly imagined that final blessed day:

> Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth: a great company shall

CARYL PHILLIPS is the author, most recently, of *A New World Order: Selected Essays* (Vintage).

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return thither.... Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

Across the years there have been numerous predictions about the imminent return of the Lost Tribes, including specific dates on which they were expected to arrive.

But still the tribes have remained irredeemably "lost"—somewhere beyond a great "Sabbath River," which, according to the Roman historian Pliny the Elder, flows for six days a week and then, like the Jews, rests on the seventh day. Had a strange man who called himself Eldad the Danite not turned up in what is now Tunisia in or about 883 C.E., the idea of the Lost Tribes might not have taken on its present-day significance. This man spoke a strange and ancient Hebrew, and he rekindled interest in the Lost Tribes by telling the local Jews many amazing "facts" about his—and their—history, including that he knew himself to be a descendant of the Lost Tribe of Dan. Three hundred years later, in the middle of the twelfth century, Benjamin ben Jonah, a Jewish trader and explorer, left a record that has come to be known as *The Travels of Benjamin of Tudela* in which he catalogued the presence of Jews in Europe and beyond, and "reported" that tens of thousands of the descendants of the tribes were living in Kurdistan and other places in Central Asia.

By the seventeenth century, these "sightings" were getting a little out of hand. The Dutch rabbi and writer Manasseh ben Israel claimed that the Lost Tribes had been found in the Americas. It was a view that remained surprisingly popular among some down to the past century: in 1930, for example, Walter Hart Blumenthal published *In Old America*, a chapter of which is titled "The Red Hand Symbol in Aboriginal America and in Primitive Palestine." (An even stranger chapter addresses "Circumcision in Red America.") The fact that Halkin does not include Blumenthal's book in his exhaustive bibliography—Halkin is a learned man, and in this chronicle of his eastern adventure he deploys his learning usefully while wearing it lightly—reflects the sheer number of published texts that expound this and other half-baked theories. According to Halkin, "scholars" have at one time or another claimed the Lost Tribes to be, in their modern incarnation, the Welsh, Dutch, Danes, Zulus, New Zealand Maoris, or even Eskimos. When faced with a history of such quackery, what on earth would persuade an intelligent man like Halkin to join the long and generally undistinguished tradition?

HALKIN MADE THREE separate expeditions as a "Lost Tribes hunter." The first journey he makes in the company of the veteran "Tribesman" Rabbi Eliahu Avichail. "Scholars and academics considered him a crackpot," Halkin scrupulously reports, but he is himself fascinated by this modest man's conviction, and he accompanies Avichail to China and Thailand on what turns out to be a futile, if fitfully amusing, search for "evidence." Despite Halkin's healthy respect for the elder man, Avichail's patent lack of curiosity in people or places, as opposed to his deep belief in the authority of books, eventually frustrates Halkin.

Mercifully, things improve when they press on to Aizawl, the capital of the Indian state of Mizoram. In this small territory squeezed between Bangladesh to the west and Burma to the east, a great number of the Indian population seem to identify passionately with Jewish practice and Jewish history, and with the country of Israel. The people have organized themselves into congregations, they have synagogues, and they have even petitioned the United Nations, albeit unsuccessfully, that they be formally recognized as a separate people (the Mizos) who have descended from the Lost Tribes.

It happens that Avichail has been instrumental in helping the Mizos come to terms with their desire to embrace Judaism. But Avichail has not discovered enough evidence to accept them as a Lost Tribe. What would count as evidence for the rabbi is determined by the definitions of Jewish law, and Halkin is frustrated by Avichail's inflexible orthodoxy. He accuses his elder of "turning Judaism into an exclusive club" by not bending the rules a little to accommodate these Mizo people.

Earlier in the week Halkin had received a visit from a Mizo man who spoke with a "sudden, hard candor": "I want to know who I am. Show me I was once a Christian, and I'll be a Christian. Show me I was a Jew, and I'll be a Jew. Show me I was an idol worshipper, and I'll worship idols. *But show me who I am.*" It is a deeply affecting moment. Halkin is a writer, not a religious authority, and the human cry for help is what he most remembers. And it is this invincible humanity that will eventually bring him back to Aizawl, this time without Rabbi Avichail.

But he is not stirred by this human cry alone. There are surprising empirical discoveries that demand to be investigated. During his first visit in the company of Avichail, Halkin noticed many linguistic and cultural coincidences between Judaic and Mizo practice that deeply puzzled him. "There were only two ways to think about it," he remarks. "Either a Tibeto-Burmese people in a remote corner of Southeast Asia had a mysterious connection with ancient Israel, or they were the victims of a mass delusion. Either way, there was a story to be written." He resolves to return to Mizoram, and to the neighboring state of Manipur, with two translators, one for each state. With his book contract in hand, Halkin begins to try to probe the mystery of why a small number of people in this otherwise Christian pocket of the world not only believe—without any real evidence—that they are descended from the "Lost" Jews, but harbor a powerful desire to "return" to their native land.

FREE NOW OF the double burden of Avichail's religiosity and the narrative task of explaining the background to the quest, Halkin's prose now gathers pace and becomes agreeably quirky, as humor and irony bubble to the surface. "The ultimate proof the Mizos are Jews: a small and never civilized people, they think they are better than everyone," the author writes in his notebook. He makes a heartfelt speech in a local synagogue that is meant to reassure the people of his good intentions: "I do not know who my distant forefathers were. My more recent ones lived in Russia. The color of my eyes and complexion tells me that they probably did not all descend from an ancient tribe of Israel. And there are many descendants of Jews in the world today who have nothing Jewish about them." He is, unsurprisingly, met with blank stares. Who is he? More to the point, they still want to know, who are they? Why will he not give them the answer to their question?

As time passes Halkin reluctantly admits that his search for evidence of a Mizo connection to the Lost Tribes seems to be failing. He seems almost relieved. Under Avichail's guidance, a small number of Mizos had actually resettled and were studying in Israel; and Halkin casts his mind back and recalls attending a Mizo wedding in Gaza. He ruefully remembers noticing the evidence of "Israelification" among these transplanted Mizos and wonders about the folly of Avichail encouraging such people to think of themselves as "belonging."

They were eager to try on their new identity, on which they had made a large down payment. They were heady with

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> the ease of slipping into it—and it was this that gave me pause. Once more an old life had been abandoned like a village in the jungle. When all was said and done, Avichail was not much different from the missionaries ... one wondered whether the children and grandchildren of the young couple beneath the wedding canopy would have to search for their identity again.

Halkin is not a sentimentalist about identity. He understands how brutal "authenticity" can be, and he writes with compassion about the difficulties that await people with a hunger for it.

As Halkin's search for evidence stumbles, his mood is not improved by a local man's deliberate, if somewhat convoluted, attempt to cheat him out of money by faking evidence of a Mizo-Israel connection. Although the rational part of Halkin's mind is by now aware that he might well be wasting his time, he continues to encounter individuals who convince him that his instincts are correct. There are too many puzzling "facts" that cannot be explained as mere coincidence. It is too simple to dismiss these "facts" as the result of a case of mass auto-suggestion. He travels to Imphal, the capital of the state of Manipur, where he encounters an old man who unequivocally tells him that he is "of the tribe of Manasseh." The man continues:

> "We Kukis do not belong to this place," he said of Manipur. "We have been here for hundreds of years, yet it is not ours. Have you ever heard of an entire people feeling out of place where their ancestors were born?"
>
> Apart from the Jews, I confessed, I never had. "There you are!" he said, vindicated. "You see, we are not a happy people. We are always yearning."
>
> "Nostalgic."
>
> "Yes."
>
> "For somewhere else."
>
> "Exactly!" He was so happy that I understood.

But Halkin does not understand. He needs hard proof, and the absence of it is beginning to drive him to lethargy and despair. "From the synagogue upstairs came the sound of the morning prayer. Too lazy to rise for it, I followed it from my bed." Eventually he admits that his inquiries in both Mizoram and Manipur have reached their natural conclusion. "There was nothing left for me to do in Imphal." And then, as in all good dramas, just when we believe that all is lost, that what seems real is only imagined, the author makes the discovery that leads to a breakthrough and prepares the way for the final act.

A local ethnographer named Dr. Khuplam visits Halkin and shows him a manuscript. It comprises old chants, songs, and tales that the doctor has spent thirty years putting together from material that he has collected from the old people in the hills. The manuscript astonishes Halkin, and he asks his readers not to "prejudge the matter" that he is about to place before them. Halkin then unfolds his theory, based on the evidence of Khuplam's manuscript, as to why, having been previously filled with doubt, he is now convinced that the Mizo people are descended from the Lost Tribe of Manasseh.

What follows is a long and detailed chapter whose authority is bolstered not only by the evidence of Khuplam, but by the discoveries that Halkin has been all the while making, which have hitherto made little sense. Now almost everything falls into place for Halkin, and it is a testament to his superb grasp of story-telling that, as he makes his case, we not only listen to him, we also want to believe him. At one point he uses the word "suppose" ten times in the space of only two paragraphs, but he persuades us to accept this repetition as evidence of his painstaking process and caution, as opposed to evidence of the flimsiness of his argument. Halkin returns to Israel convinced of his theory, and then he journeys to India for a third time, specifically to see Dr. Khuplam and other "knowledgeable people" who might help him further to ground his ideas.

It is during this third and final visit that Halkin discovers that this obscure people "in a little known corner of Southeast Asia had a holiday reminiscent of the biblical Passover" whose origin they did not comprehend. This discovery is made all the more remarkable by the fact that the Mizo are not bread eaters, but for some inexplicable reason they know that they must sit down on this one day of the year and eat bread without yeast. When added to all the other discoveries, Halkin is now, as he tells the people, "107 percent sure" of their origins as the Lost Tribe of Manasseh. In the passage that follows, which is as moving as it is scholarly and persuasive, Halkin addresses the people and gives them their history. He is unsure of the chutzpah of his actions—"a stranger who had spent only a few weeks among them, who didn't know their language, and had only a superficial knowledge of their culture, I was now expounding their own past to them"; but he justifies his presumption by relying on the authority of a "western education that enabled me to think about textual and historical

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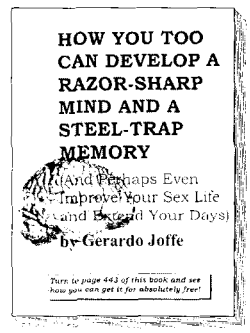
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by Gerardo Joffe

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problems in a way they were unaccustomed to."

It is this same "western education"—fed as it is by the authority of books, and unmoved by the special appeals of the human heart—that, ironically enough after his admonitory words to Rabbi Avichail, now leads Halkin to fail the Mizo at the very moment when he is finally offering them hope. A local man asks the logical question of the Israeli who has proven to his own satisfaction that he has found descendants of ancient Jews: "Will the government of Israel recognize us through the cooperation of your good self?" And his question is met with the following.

> "All that matters," I said, "is who you are and want to be. You're not Jews. But you do go back, in one branch of your family, to the Israelites of the Bible. That's amazing. What you do with it is up to you."
>
> "But sir," [the questioner] appealed, "does not this make you and us the same people?"
>
> "No," I answered. The word had rarely sounded so gross to me. "Some of our ancestors were the same people. That was a long time ago."
>
> It was the best I could do.

Halkin knows that this is not good enough. He has a conscience about tribalism. But in the remaining two pages of his book he does little to repair or to explain his rejection of these people whom he has labored so hard to find and to certify. His assertion that their discovery is of great importance for biblical scholarship falls on deaf ears: "They listened without enthusiasm. They wanted fish or fowl, and kuki grub. I had given them cake." In fact, what he had given them was something far more difficult to digest.

HALKIN'S REJECTION OF the Mizo is based on blood. They are not Jews. On this point he is, of course, correct: if one uses ethnicity and the existence of a Jewish genetic profile to determine membership of the tribe, then in all likelihood the Mizo will probably fail the test. Halkin apologizes. "I'm sorry I couldn't tell your people they're all full-blooded Israelite," he candidly observes. "I know that would have made them happier." But surely this is not necessarily so. What would have made them happier, I expect, would have been to know that the "fact" of their "belonging" might now clear a path for a return, so that they could go "home" and become whole people in a land that might, in the fullness of time, embrace them, and their children, and eventually their children's children. But as we know from Halkin's sobering memories of the Mizo wedding in Gaza, he has little faith in such "Israelification" for those who do not qualify by blood. By his own admission he is not a full-blooded Israelite, but he is quick to make his own case. "There are plenty of us half-bloods, though. There's been a lot of research into the subject."

Halkin is a Zionist, and also an extremely fine writer whose soul is in tune with the desires of the human heart. In this book, his ability to understand the desire of others to belong is strong and admirable. Yet it is not until he has found his evidence that the real drama of Halkin's book unfolds. Will Halkin find a way to accept these "lost" people—be they "full bloods," "half-bloods," or "no bloods"—as his brothers, and to welcome them as migrants into his world? In the end his answer is clear. He would prefer them not to attempt to integrate into his Israel. I understand that Halkin's preference is based on a realistic understanding of the hardships that would await these people if they acted upon their ancient identity—and yet it strikes me as oddly cruel. Would it hurt that much to allow them a chance to belong? After all, only four hundred and fifty of them have migrated to Israel in the past decade, and in India only some thirty-five hundred are living as practicing Jews. Moreover, almost half of the recent emigrants from the former Soviet Union are not, according to rabbinical standards, Jewish. Does Halkin really fear that an attempt at "Israelification" in the wake of a Mizo migration might somehow damage the Jewish character? Does this account for his bluntness?

Halkin calls his rejection of the Mizo people "gross," and his word suggests an awareness of the conflict between his head and his heart. This would be a natural fissure in a writer who throughout the course of this book has proved himself to be an attractive mixture of assiduous detective and compassionate guide. But in the end, it appears, authority will prevail. Luckily for Halkin, when his own family left Russia for the United States there was no "blood" impediment to bar their migration and subsequent assimilation. True, Israel is not the United States, and there are few writers today who understand this better than Halkin himself.

In May 1998, Halkin wrote persuasively in *Jewish World Review* about the increasing complexity of Jewish identity in a multicultural world of frequent migrations and interchangeable nationalities. He asked a pertinent question: "Why is the Tel-Aviv-born-and-raised child of Thai parents who speaks Hebrew as his native language and relates to Israeli culture as his own not a Jew by nationality in the same sense that he would have been an American had he grown up in New York?" There is no easily packaged answer, of course; and as a result Halkin predicts a "chaotic" opening up of Jewish identity in the near future, a kind of national affiliation that will militate against family ties that are defined by "blood."

And yet he laments this change. Describing himself as a "secular Zionist," he admits to liking the "DNA" that creates the family bonding, and he regrets that inevitably "there will be a thinning out." The conclusion of his book suggests that Halkin remains somewhat conflicted about the desirability of a new, non-ethnic development of Jewish identity, although he knows, as he mentioned in his essay, that "the prospect of hundreds of thousands of native-born, non-Arab, Hebrew-speaking Israelis who are not Jews by halakhic standards is not merely a possibility; it is a near certainty." One wishes that he could have shared these words with his Mizo hosts, however much the words might have stuck in his throat. Had he done so, he would have helped these good people in their quest to return to what they call home and become members of the new Israel that Halkin so lucidly imagines. ■

My Tea Ceremony

Oh, you bowls, don't tell the others I drink
my liquor out of you. I want a feeling of beauty
to surround the plainest facts of my life.
Sitting on my bare heels, making a formal bow,
I want an atmosphere of gentleness to drive
out the squalor of everyday existence
in a little passive house surrounded
by black rocks and grey gravel.
Half-cerebral, half-sensual, I want to hear
the water murmuring in the kettle
and to see the spider, green as jade,
remaining aloof on the wall.
Heart, unquiet thing,
I don't want to hate anymore. I want love
to trample through my arms again.

Henri Cole

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Odors and Ideas

By DAVID A. BELL

The Making of Revolutionary Paris by David Garrioch

(University of California Press, 412 pp., $34.95)

THERE ARE CERTAIN times and certain places so indelibly inscribed in literature that historians may be driven to despair. How does one write a book on Berlin in the 1920s, knowing that readers will forever see the city through the lens of Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz?* How can any historical portrait of nineteenth-century London not drift in Dickens's bubbling wake? And historians must be made of particularly stern stuff to take on nineteenth-century Paris, with the ghosts of Balzac, Baudelaire, Hugo, and Zola garrulously standing guard.

Yet eighteenth-century Paris should present far fewer problems of this sort. Home to the period's greatest thinkers, and witness to its most convulsive political events, the city nonetheless lacked novelists and poets capable of immortalizing its human geography as Balzac would do in *Père Goriot* or Baudelaire in "Tableaux Parisiens." Indeed, the nineteenth-century reconstruction of the city by Baron Haussmann, whose great boulevards sliced surgically through the dense tissue of its old neighborhoods, stamped not simply a new façade, but a new character on Paris, eclipsing what had stood there before. Baudelaire himself would write: "The old Paris is no more (a city's shape shifts faster, alas, than a mortal's heart)."

In seeking to recover this lost city, moreover, the historian can benefit from amazingly rich veins of source material. At their deaths, eighteenth-century Parisians of even modest wealth had their possessions meticulously inventoried by notaries, often right down to the titles of individual books. The resulting documents, a social historian's dream, now sit in the French National Archives, filling literally miles of shelves. A century before the establishment of the London police, a large and energetic Parisian force compiled detailed reports on most significant crimes. Filled with vivid eyewitness testimony and verbatim records of often brutal interrogations, they are reminiscent of particularly clinical episodes of *Law & Order*, and they, too, lie in the archives, thousands of boxes of them.

Then there were the city's unusually diligent journal-keepers. When an unfortunate Parisian died after eating rotten cod that fishmongers had bleached with alum and quicklime to restore its color, the cynical barrister Edmond Barbier was there to record the incident and to comment on the autopsy ("all black inside ... the surgeons' report is said to be frightful"). When rumors flew that King Louis XV could find sexual satisfaction only with fifteen-year-old virgins, his disillusioned former foreign minister, the Marquis d'Argenson, gleefully made note of them. These men came from the elite; but to get a sense of lower-class Parisian life there is the extraordinary, boastful autobiography of the artisan Jacques-Louis Ménétra, a picaresque relation of brawls, sex, rape, practical jokes, and also the more mundane passages of a lusty and troubled life.

Best of all, eighteenth-century Paris was home to some of history's greatest journalists. There was the prolific Nicolas Edme Restif de la Bretonne, coiner of the word "pornography" (and diligent practitioner of the genre), who wrote a much-embroidered newspaper column about his nocturnal prowlings through the metropolis; Simon Linguet, whose hair-raising account of his imprisonment in a royal fortress called the Bastille turned it into the ultimate symbol of despotism, ripe for toppling; and Louis Petit de Bachaumont, whose priceless inventories of high cultural gossip were copied out by hand, rather than printed, to avoid the vigilant eye of the censor. The greatest of all the reporters was Louis-Sébastien Mercier, who constructed his massive, dazzling *Tableau de Paris* out of hundreds of short, impressionistic sketches of everything from sweepstakes to gutters to wigmakers to aristocratic mansions. And, unforgettably, butchers:

> A young steer is knocked down, and its head bound to the floor with ropes; a heavy club breaks its skull, and a thick knife makes a deep incision in its throat; its steaming blood flows out in great gobs, along with its life.... The butchers are fierce and bloody-looking, their arms bare, their necks swollen, their eyes red, their aprons scarlet.... The blood they shed seems to enflame both their faces and their temperaments. They are marked out by their crude and furious lusts, and there are streets near their shops, close enough to be filled with cadaverous odors, where the worst sort of prostitutes, seated on the curbstones at midday, brazenly display their debaucheries.

It is not quite Balzac, but the *Tableau* deserves a larger readership than it has gained outside of France. (Jeremy D. Popkin recently published an excellent abridged translation under the title *The Panorama of Paris.*)

GIVEN THIS INCOMPARABLE material, it is a surprise that scholars have in fact produced so few memorable surveys of eighteenth-century Paris. Daniel Roche, its greatest living historian, has used the sources to brilliant effect, particularly when reconstructing the birth of modern consumer culture, but mostly in dense and difficult monographs, accessible only to specialists. Too many of his competitors cower in the crowded warrens of scholarly hyperspecialization. So we should be grateful to the Australian historian David Garrioch for producing this rich and entertaining, if not entirely satisfying, account. It tells in learned detail how Paris changed in the century before the French Revolution, and it also conveys something of the city's color and texture—even, as with Mercier, its smells. (There are pungent passages on subjects such as the Cemetery of the Innocents, where two thousand Parisians a year were buried in huge mephitic pits.) The book falters only in its too-cursory attention to some of the things that made Paris then, as now, unique: sensuality, theatricality, and the life of the mind.

Garrioch is a social historian who has written well-received monographs on eighteenth-century Parisian neighborhood communities and on the formation of the Parisian bourgeoisie. He is a habitué of the police and notarial archives, and obviously likes nothing better than delving into these paper mines to find the buried traces of ordinary lives. His best

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chapters deal with the conditions of daily survival, with indigence and poverty, with popular protest and popular religion. He lucidly explains, for example, that just keeping the city fed demanded Herculean feats of organization. In the year 1738 alone, it was estimated that Parisians consumed 400 million liters of wine, not to mention 60,000 head of cattle, 125,000 calves, and 40,000 pigs. Most importantly, Paris lived on bread: up to two pounds per person per day. To supply the grain, "huge barges towed by teams of twenty horses made their slow way upstream from as far as Normandy," and 2,000 windmills and water mills worked tirelessly to turn it into flour. It was not only a bad harvest that raised the specter of famine. If the Seine froze, the barges could not move, and the water mills could not turn.

If the supply fell, prices rose—and the common people might decide to take matters into their own hands. In the summer of 1725, when the price of a four-pound loaf, normally eight sous, rose to fourteen sous, rioters in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine started looting bakeries. One episode started when a female newspaper seller insisted she would not pay more than twelve sous, yelling: "Dirty bugger of a dog, give me bread for my money." In discussing the incident, Garrioch calls attention to the way the common people tried to enforce customary notions of a just price, and to the leading role of women in food riots: not only could they pose as guardians of the pantry, but soldiers were less likely to shoot them. And Garrioch notes that the riots ultimately challenged the authority of the royal government, which bore final responsibility for assuring a steady supply of affordable food. In October 1789, hungry Parisian rioters, led by women, would tramp into the Palace of Versailles and lead the king and queen—whom they sardonically dubbed "the Baker and the Baker's wife"—back to the city, there to become prisoners, then victims, of the Revolution.

Following Daniel Roche, Garrioch is also illuminating on the rise of consumer culture. Paris had its share of *misérables*, but even in times of dearth it was emphatically not a place where a handful of nobles ruled over the starving masses. (Forget *A Tale of Two Cities*.) To take a mundane but telling example: as early as 1711 the city had eleven hundred public cabs, used by the common people as well as the nobs. A common Parisian lament, then as now, was the impossible traffic. By 1789, most shopkeepers and artisans owned pocket watches, and nearly everyone wore stockings. A notarial inventory reveals that in 1794 a humble starch maker and his wife possessed no fewer than seventy framed prints, three large mirrors, two barometers, five paintings, a clock, one hundred forty pieces of porcelain, two silk umbrellas, a coffee grinder, and enough furniture to fill their three-room apartment to overflowing. Recognizably modern patterns of consumption had come into existence.

Overall, Garrioch's story is a familiar tale of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, although it bears also the imprint of Foucault and recent feminist scholars, with their suspicions of an allegedly disciplinary and repressive Enlightenment. Traditional hierarchies lost their strength, while social mobility increased, along with the power of money. Traditional forms of community broke down. Individuals identified less with the families writ large of neighborhood and guild, and more with what one writer called the "enchanted isle" of the individual household. A veritable cult of domesticity arose, with damaging results for the status of women. State officials, guided by new rational ideals of administration, political economy, and hygiene, strove to break up guild monopolies, to open up crowded and insalubrious streets to the sun and the air, and to discipline a populace that they considered primitive and unruly. Religious observance declined, along with respect for the clergy. A carnivalesque popular culture saw its wild colors fade. Social divisions grew sharper, even as Parisians discovered a taste for equality. The Revolution accelerated all these changes, and so the Paris of Mercier gave way to the Paris of Balzac.

None of these conclusions will come as a surprise to anyone familiar with recent European historiography. Yet Garrioch is refreshingly concise, lucid, and measured in his approach. He concludes his book with the welcome acknowledgment that while the eighteenth century may have made Paris a harsher place, it also brought ideas of equality before the law and promotion on merit, and fatally damaged traditional habits of deference. He has a good eye for anecdotes. In discussing plebian culture, for instance, he turns to Mercier and his description of the carnival character called the *chienlit*, or "bed-shitter":

> A mask parades around the *beaux quartiers*, beneath the windows of ladies young and old, appearing to be in a shirt with no trousers; the back of the shirt is covered in mustard; other masks, following behind, hurry up to this walking mustard pot with pieces of sausage, and the common people shriek appreciatively at this disgusting humor.

Garrioch sees Mercier's own critical stance as illustrative of the growing elite distaste for such practices, which would in time lead to their disappearance. Meanwhile, to show the difficulties involved in rationalizing city government, the book nicely discusses the attempt in 1779 to give houses street numbers, which Parisians of all classes at first angrily resisted (before that date, letters would bear addresses such as "Monsieur Aubert, merchant sword-cutler, rue Bourg-l'abbé, at the sign of Alexander the Great").

Garrioch wisely resists ascribing the changes that he chronicles to anything so all-encompassingly simple as "capitalism" or "modernization." Indeed, readers who associate eighteenth-century Paris with deists such as Voltaire or atheists such as Diderot will be surprised to find that Garrioch assigns a key role in the story to an apparently traditional religious quarrel. The reason is that until late in the century, even as the audacity of the *philosophes* roiled the drawing rooms of the elite, the city's common people remained more concerned with the strange and powerful Catholic movement known as Jansenism. Deeply pessimistic about humanity's capacity for salvation, and insistent upon the need for every person to develop an individual relationship with God, the Jansenists deeply frightened both the secular and the religious authorities, who saw in them the vanguard of a new Reformation.

Intensive campaigns of persecution followed: to weed Jansenists from the clergy, and to ensure that the faithful received absolution only from the hands of certified orthodox priests. In turn, a hard core of Jansenists turned conspiratorial and chiliastic. When a pious Jansenist deacon died young in 1727—probably due to an overindulgence in self-mortification—his gravesite was transformed into a pilgrimage site, where the faithful experienced miracle cures, convulsed, had visions, and spoke in tongues. The king ordered the cemetery closed amid wild protests, leading an anonymous wit to post the memorable notice: "By royal command, God is forbidden to do miracles here." (It is even better in French: *De par le roi, défense à Dieu/de faire miracles en ce lieu.*) Garrioch suggests persuasively that Jansenism significantly shaped the development of modern individualism in France, and that the quarrels it generated

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helped to alienate the common people from the church.

IT IS ONLY when Garrioch moves away from the common people that he begins to lose his touch. This book on eighteenth-century Paris has remarkably little to say about the Enlightenment. It learnedly discusses the new forms of sociability visible in the century's great intellectual *salons*, but it is much less concerned with what the participants in the salons actually talked about. It traces the expansion of the market for books, but skirts rapidly over their contents. The *philosophes* interest Garrioch mainly because of their influence on Parisian public opinion, not because they made the city of Paris the pole star of one of history's greatest intellectual movements.

The book as a whole tilts at this populist angle. It devotes considerable space to popular entertainments at the fairs and on the boulevards, but it says almost nothing about what was arguably the single most influential cultural institution in eighteenth-century Europe: the Comédie Française. Having a play performed there was the holy grail for nearly every aspiring French writer (including Voltaire, who first made his reputation there, and Mercier); and the theater itself served as the pre-eminent gathering place for Parisian high society. Garrioch diligently traces the manufacture and the spread of luxury goods, but he has less to say about the changing meanings of luxury and taste. He writes in fascinating detail about the status of women, but he barely comments on the sensuality and the sexual freedom with which Paris was associated throughout Europe.

And so a casual reader could finish *The Making of Revolutionary Paris* with almost no sense that its subject was not just a large and colorful European city, but Europe's eighteenth-century capital, a place of extraordinary intellectual ferment and an object of almost unbearable desire for men and women across the Continent. "Outside of the Church no Salvation," went the ancient Catholic motto. "Outside of Paris no Salvation," quipped Mercier. Mercier himself loathed much of what he saw in the city, yet, like a hopeless addict, he could not resist it.

If Garrioch's populism leads him to neglect the Enlightenment, his wistfulness for lost forms of communal life causes him to overlook one of the most enchanting, if intangible, things about Paris that did not disappear with the Revolution. "In Paris," Jean Cocteau once remarked "everybody wants to be an actor; nobody is content to be a spectator." The remark is as true for the eighteenth century as it is for the twentieth and the twenty-first. Daily affairs in Paris are invested with a remarkable sense of performance, from the intricate ceremonial followed in mansions and ministries (successive revolutions have changed less than one might think in this regard) to the elaborate bantering that can accompany the simplest transaction in the marketplace or the simplest greeting in the street or café. Eighteenth-century observers such as Mercier and Restif de la Bretonne recognized the quality and thrived on it, as did modern observers of the city such as Orwell, Simenon, and Richard Cobb.

What explains it? Garrioch does not explore the question, but it is worth exploring. One reason is very simple. From the eighteenth century to the present, Paris has been a remarkably small and compact city, huddling around the islands in the Seine, while London irresistibly sprawled. Eighteenth-century kings actively tried to limit Paris's expansion, and ordered travelers stopped and searched at its boundaries. Today the city still has only half the surface area of Brooklyn, and barely three times that of its own principal international airport. Smallness, in turn, leads to density: the population squeezes into tiny apartments, and seeks refuge from them on the streets, in cafés, in stores, and at the theater (even servants and artisans could attend the eighteenth-century Comédie Française, standing in the pit below the boxes of the *notables*). A French friend of mine once lived with his girlfriend in an apartment measuring, in its entirety, twelve feet by nine feet. "Let's go to the living room," they said, meaning the café downstairs. They went to the movies every night.

The result, then and now, is that Parisians live much of their lives on display. It affects the way they dress, the way they talk, even—as Rebecca Spang recently showed in her fascinating history of the French restaurant—the way they eat. (Restaurants are another eminently Parisian subject that receives short shrift from Garrioch.) Parisian theatricality explains something of the proverbial Parisian rudeness to tourists, who are the true spectators of the city's permanent performance art, and disrupt it when they insist on clambering up on stage and asking their awkward questions. Most American visitors have been on the receiving end of this rudeness at some point. Yet the same theatricality that inspires it keeps drawing many of us back to the city, just as it did with Mercier, even after many of Paris's other attractions have faded with familiarity. A sense of theatricality cannot be dug out of the archives like an inventory of possessions, but it is something that historians such as David Garrioch might at least pretend to ponder. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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combined only account for around 15 percent of the drop in the ten-year surplus. Lots of critics in 2001 worried that the surplus projections were Pollyannaish, for reasons ranging from overheated capital gains receipts to a potential military emergency. Daniels and President Bush repeatedly insisted they were a sure bet. As for this year's projections, I never said the administration's GDP projections were out of line with the private sector. I said its *corporate profit* projections were out of line. Nor did my story mention the 2002 deficit. It focused on the long-term deficit, of which the OMB's own numbers show the tax cut to be a major cause.

TO THE EDITORS:

Jonathan Chait's piece about President Bush's budget submission was over the top. Accusations of "public financial misconduct," "dishonest accounting methods," and "wildly optimistic economic projections" read like a press release from the Democratic National Committee. The Republican staff at the Senate Budget Committee came up with a larger estimate than the OMB for the deficit next year, and almost all of that difference is due to revenue. However, that does not mean OMB is engaged in misconduct or dishonesty or is issuing wildly optimistic numbers. OMB's higher revenue numbers are largely due to greater optimism about corporate profits, which is not without foundation. Profits rebounded very strongly after the 1981–1982 recession when unit labor costs were falling and the Institute for Supply Management's manufacturing price index was rising. The same conditions exist today. Although we are less optimistic about profits than OMB—the stock market rebounded after 1981–1982, unlike this year—its estimate is not without some historical precedent.

G. WILLIAM HOAGLAND
Republican Staff Director
Senate Budget Committee
Washington, D.C. ■

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PROVINCETOWN DIARIST

Proof of Gold

THE ACTUAL DIMENSIONS of the thong remain somewhat in dispute. But on a Monday night in July, an aspiring drag queen named Barbie-Q was detained outside the Crown & Anchor Inn in Provincetown. Her thong was apparently too revealing to be worn on the street. One eyewitness told me that the arresting police officer had allegedly complained, "What if my wife or children saw you dressed up like that?" In Provincetown, a small, countercultural enclave at the tip of Cape Cod, them's fightin' words. Arresting drag queens for wearing skimpy clothing in Ptown is not unlike arresting a priest for saying Mass in Saint Patrick's Cathedral. Few would claim that the many drag queens who clomp up and down the town's main street are aesthetically on a par with the searing sunsets, dappled shingles, and golden dunes that you see on postcards from the Cape. But unshaven men in frocks and pumps are a central part of the Ptown flora and fauna, and locals take their civic duty to protect them quite seriously—even when, like Barbie-Q, they had had previous minor run-ins with the law.

THE ARREST WOULDN'T HAVE SEEMED such a big deal if it hadn't been part of a trend toward more aggressive police work—i.e., normal for everywhere else—by a new chief recently imported from, yes, Texas. When I first heard that a Texas police captain had been hired in Ptown, I thought it would make a great premise for a situation comedy. But, alas, the reality has been more situation than comedy. An inquiry by the *Provincetown Banner* revealed that "protective custody" arrests had risen markedly since the previous summer. Rumors spread about people being yanked into jail for walking home drunk after closing time. A patch of rocky sand under the deck of the Boatslip Inn—which in previous years had served as an impromptu sex club for after-hours revelers—was now subject to regular police patrols. During the week of July 4, when thousands of muscle guys descended on this little village for raves to music made palatable only by discreet consumption of illegal substances, the cops went into overdrive. Subsequent dances were canceled to protect the patrons from the increasingly assertive policing.

IN PTOWN THIS SERIES OF EVENTS meant one obvious thing: drama. Every summer, it seems, we have some kind of controversy. Last year it was the town's attempt to shut down an all-nude singing review called "Naked Boys Singing." It was one of the worst shows I've ever seen in Ptown—and that's saying something. But the principle of defending tacky pseudo-entertainment is not one Ptowners could or should abandon lightly. So we didn't, and the show simply continued despite mounting fines. This year the fuss about the new law-and-order regime came to a head at a town meeting, where residents presented their impressive list of complaints to the new police chief and town elders. Robert Putnam would be proud of the rampant communitarianism on display. Grievances were aired and, after much hyperventilation, the town selectmen averred that, while they still backed the police chief, he obviously had some cultural adjustments to make. And for the most part, August seemed to pass without any similar trauma. Texas, it turns out, we ain't.

PTOWN IS A PLACE, AFTER ALL, IN which the law has always been enforced more by the spirit than by the letter. It has long been a place of outlaws, outsiders, refugees from somewhere or other. It therefore exists in its own way as a petri dish for what is now described as "diversity." It's not racially diverse, mind you; like much of Cape Cod, it's numbingly white. But it mixes working-class Portuguese fishermen and their families, nesting and entrepreneurial lesbians, old Cape Cod dynasties, imported Jamaican manual workers, aging drag queens, European exchange students, and plenty of wealthy gay men. Add to this mix writers, painters, and druggies, and you begin to see why both John Waters and Norman Mailer call it home. (The ancient joke is that Ptown is a drinking town with a fishing problem.) The comedian Margaret Cho is the latest arrival; one of the more surreal experiences of this summer was finding myself on a makeshift stage at the Governor Bradford bar singing a karaoke version of Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" with Cho, Ryan Landry (a local drag genius), Penny Champagne (Landry's boyfriend in drag), my boyfriend (not in drag), and several quite drunk teenage girls who, by their ministrations, had clearly got the wrong idea about my sexual orientation. We had a blast.

PTOWN, OF COURSE, HAS ITS PURITAN aspects as well. It's highly regulated, highly taxed, and passersby will sometimes tell you how to walk your dog. Renovating your home is a little like applying for a driving license in the old Soviet Union. The ongoing culture clash between the more hedonistic gay men and the more serious-minded lesbians is also a reminder of the tension always present in the gay-lesbian "community." Straight-gay relations are equally fraught at times and were made worse by the publication of Peter Manso's new book, *Ptown*, which bemoans the fact that so many super-wealthy gay men have allegedly taken over the town and forced its older and less affluent (i.e., straight) residents out. Growing income inequality has also made Ptown's cultural balance more precarious. When I first came here, 13 years ago, there were far more drifters, wanderers, freaks, potheads, and other assorted strays who showed up, were made welcome, and then moved on. Increasingly, these types simply can't afford the rents here or they have to spend every waking minute working at menial jobs to keep a roof over their heads. So while most of us who arrived in the late '80s and early '90s are still coming back, the ranks of the younger generations are clearly thinning. No one knows quite what to do about it. We're all terrified of becoming some kind of Nantucket in pumps.

BUT SOMEHOW, I FEEL CONFIDENT Ptown will escape that fate. It has an ecology of its own, an ecology that quietly sifts through newcomers and selects the ones who get it, who know why they love it and see the same glint in each others' ornery eyes. Ever since I first came here, people have been bemoaning how Ptown was going down the tubes, how it wasn't the same as it used to be, and on and on. But this coiled, exposed sandbar of difference hangs on. Perhaps it's the sheer, gob-smacking natural beauty of the place, its light, its spiral of land at sea, its meandering mischief. Each year I put off leaving longer and longer, as the place wraps itself around me like a vine. It isn't real, I realize. But somehow it is more real. You can come here, as Thoreau wrote, and leave all America behind. And then you realize that this too is America, unkempt, unruly, pied, prickly, tolerant, an emblem of what the future of the whole place could be, if we wanted, if we tried.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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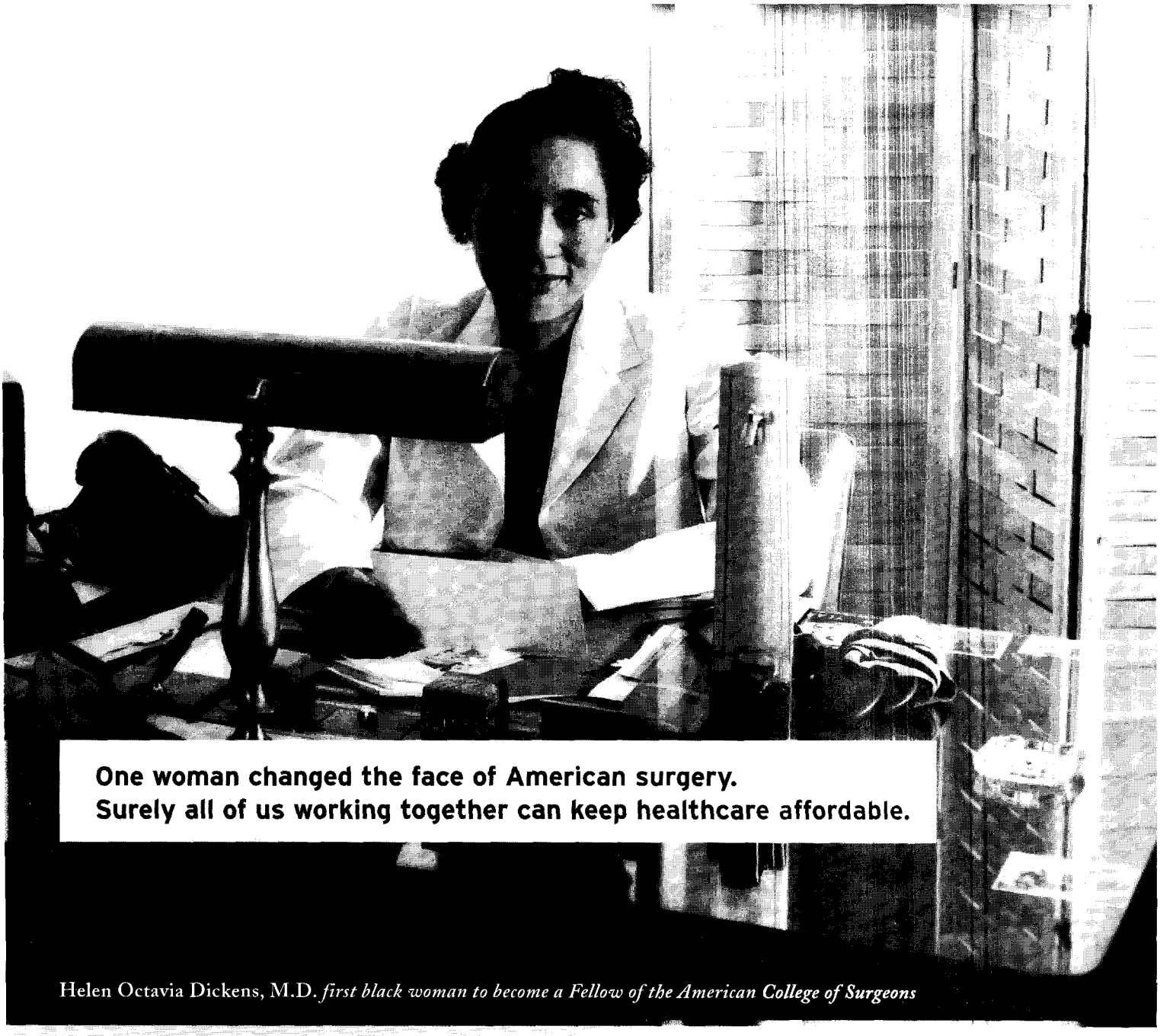

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